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California

New Law Requires California Physicians to Inform Patients of Probation Status

Beginning this summer, physicians in California who have been placed on probation for certain offenses will be required to inform and discuss their probation status directly with their patients.

The Patient’s Right to Know Act (SB 1448), passed by California’s legislature, requires notification of probationary status for cases that involve the commission of any act or sexual abuse, misconduct, or relations with a patient as defined in the state’s Business and Professions Code; drug or alcohol abuse directly resulting in harm to patients, or to the extent that such use impairs the ability of the licensee to practice safely; criminal conviction involving harm to patient health; and inappropriate prescribing resulting in harm to patients and a probationary period of five years or more.

The new law also requires podiatrists, acupuncturists, chiropractors, and naturopathic doctors who are on probation to notify patients of their probationary status before seeing a patient for the first time.

Source: *Medical Board of California News*, Spring 2019

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Kentucky

Kentucky Telehealth Program Website Launched

Kentucky’s Cabinet for Health and Family Services has announced the launch of the Kentucky Telehealth Program website.

The new website serves as a repository of pertinent telehealth information for health care providers throughout Kentucky. The website includes telehealth laws; policy and guidelines for Medicaid, Medicare and health benefit plans; frequently asked questions (FAQs); Medicaid coding requirements; and access to other U.S. telehealth resources.

The new website, which was mandated by legislation in Kentucky in 2018, is overseen by Kentucky’s Office of Health Data and Analytics as a part of its coordination of the Kentucky Telehealth Program. Its mandate is to assist providers by promoting, advocating and supporting telehealth adoption across the state.

The Kentucky Telehealth Program website can be accessed by visiting <https://chfs.ky.gov> and searching for “telehealth.”

Source: *Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure Newsletter*, Summer 2019

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Washington

Washington Medical Commission Tackles Key Barrier to Physician Wellness

The Washington Medical Commission (WMC) recently took steps in response to continuing calls nationally for state medical boards to review licensure application questions and consider eliminating or modifying questions specifically related to mental health and substance use disorder diagnosis to address current impairment rather than probing for current or past illness or treatment.

As the result of an 18-month effort to review the language of Washington’s medical licensure applications, several changes to the state’s medical licensure language were implemented.

These included changing the definition of “currently” in relation to an existing health condition to include only the prior six months (previously the time period had been within the past two years) and adding a safe-haven provision to application instructions so that some individuals may answer “no” to items on licensure forms related to health impairment.

In addition, questions specifically asking about the impact of treatment or work accommodations on safety-to-practice were eliminated, along with questions regarding diagnosis of paraphilias.

Source: *Washington Medical Commission Update!* Spring 2019