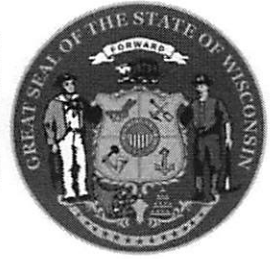


Wisconsin Medical Examining Board
Dr. Sheldon Wasserman, Chair



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

April 23, 2012

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

I am requesting that you expand your recently announced United States Department of Health and Human Services investigation into the actions and oversight of state medical examining boards to include the Wisconsin Medical Examining Board (MEB).

In February 2012, the Executive Branch directed a lapse of \$1.25 million from the FY 2012 budget of the MEB, which was approved by the legislative Joint Finance Committee.

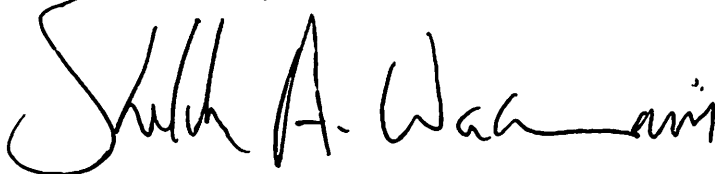
Under Wisconsin Statute 20.165(1)(hg) 90% of funds collected from license applications and renewals are to be allocated to the MEB. Ten percent of collected fees are already lapsed to the State of Wisconsin general fund. The \$1.25 million dollar budget lapse represents a remarkable 66% of the MEB's current Fiscal Year spending authority of a little less than \$1.9 million.

This funding cut undermines the Wisconsin legislative mandate of protecting the public from incompetent or malicious medical practices. Historically in Wisconsin, the MEB regulatory agency partner, currently the Department of Safety and Professional Services and previously the Department of Regulation and Licensing, had

insufficient staff to accomplish its legislative mandate. Attorneys at MEB routinely had caseloads of 90-100 cases per month. Because of this, and with bipartisan support, the Wisconsin legislative Joint Finance Committee in 2009 recommended the addition of six new positions, as well as reorganizing MEB functions into a separate budget unit within what was then DRL (Department of Regulation and Licensing). This change resulted in a significant increase in cases closed and in formal disciplinary actions and importantly a reduction in the time necessary to pursue investigations.

Despite this staffing increase, the four Wisconsin MEB attorneys carry average caseloads of 70 or so per month, at least double what's seen in many states. It's expected that the MEB staff will now be downsized by at least one of the four attorney positions and one investigator position. This reduction in funding will eliminate the important gains made by MEB, and increase the time needed to pursue cases and thus, significantly impair the ability of the MEB to fulfill its role of protecting the residents of Wisconsin.

I request your action to help safeguard Wisconsin citizens from medical misconduct and to prevent their being denied proper, timely justice and protection.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sheldon A. Wasserman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "S".

Sheldon A. Wasserman, MD

Chair

Wisconsin Medical Examining Board