

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MEDICAL BOARD ANNOUNCES NEW TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

BOSTON- On Wednesday, December 12, 2001, the Board of Registration in Medicine held a demonstration of its new document imaging initiative at its monthly public meeting. "Given the 15.4% increase in physicians applying for limited licensure in 2001, we must invest in systems that make it easier for teaching hospitals to have access to information about the applicants for residency programs," said Dr. Martin Crane, Chair of the Board's Licensing Committee. The agency recently began converting paper files into electronic files by scanning licensing documentation. "Our agency's goal is to continue to improve on customer service, save money and increase efficiency," he added.

Dorothy Keville, the consumer representative on the Board, pointed out that the new system will allow the agency to bring more information to consumers through its website. "Currently, we tell consumers about any disciplinary action taken on a physician through the "Physician Profiles" program, but consumers have to file a request for the documents that explain the discipline. With the new system, we can add this important consumer information to our website," she said. Last year, the national healthcare watchdog organization "Public Citizen" recognized the Massachusetts Board of Medicine as having one of the best consumer websites in the country, but criticized the agency for not including the documents detailing disciplinary actions.

Executive Director Nancy Achin Sullivan also stated that she was grateful to the Legislature and the Governor for supporting this latest initiative that will increase the efficiency of the agency, eliminate duplication of services and responsibilities, and allow staff to provide more accessible and consumer-friendly service and information. She also pointed out that the Board's website is one of the most popular consumer information sites in state government, and that its Physician Profiles program will have over 3.5 million "hits" in 2001. "Through the effective use of technology, we can serve the needs of our citizens in a cost-effective manner," Sullivan said. The Agency expects to have all current physician disciplinary files available to the public within 6 months.

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine licenses more than 30,000 physicians, osteopaths and acupuncturists. The Board was created to protect the public health and safety by setting standards for the practice of medicine and ensuring that doctors who practice in the Commonwealth are appropriately qualified and competent. The Board investigates complaints, holds hearings, and determines sanctions. More information about the Board is available at www.massmedboard.org.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Additional information is available by calling the Board's External Relations Manager at (617) 727-3086, Ext. 359.
