

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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STATE BOARD RELEASES PCA UPDATE

The Board of Registration in Medicine has released an Update entitled “[Serious Neurologic Complications in Patients Receiving Neuraxial Anesthesia/Analgesia When Taking Medications That Alter Clotting Mechanisms](#).” The analysis that led to the creation of this Update was performed by the PCA Committee, a committee of the Board. The Committee became concerned with the lack of a systemic approach to this problem after it received numerous reports of serious neurologic complications in patients who had spinal or epidural anesthesia or analgesia while taking medications that affect clotting. These complications were occurring despite the development of national guideline on this topic.

The PCA Committee’s function is unique among the nation’s state licensing boards. Its ultimate responsibility is the protection of the public. In its review of major incident reports, the Committee convenes a panel of experts to study the issues involved and develops information to share with hospitals to increase the awareness of the potential risks to patients. Recently, it recommended that all hospitals monitor the interpretation of X-rays by ER physicians and compare them with the later official readings by radiologists. It also alerted hospitals of the dangers of a delay in reading electrocardiograms.

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. It is also responsible for providing quality assurance programs and technical assistance to licensed health care facilities in the state. The Board seeks to educate physicians and facilities as to what constitutes the safe practice of medicine, as well as activities that fall outside such practice. In furtherance of that goal, the Board believes it is useful to alert physicians and health care facilities as to areas of practice in which questions of patient safety have frequently arisen. A full listing of PCA alerts is available at: <http://www.massmedboard.org/pcaupdates.htm>.

PCA Update Notifications



Oncology Drug Administration
February, 1993

Intravenous Potassium Chloride
January, 1997

Pediatric Neurosurgical Procedures
January, 1998

Adrenocortical Insufficiency Secondary to
Previous Treatment with Adrenal
Corticosteroids - October, 1998

Laparoscopic Injuries
May, 1999

Radiology Coverage in Emergency Rooms
June, 2000

Unread Electrocardiograms
September, 2000

Serious Neurological Complications in Patients
Receiving Neuraxial Anesthesia/Analgesia When
Taking Medications That Alter Clotting Mechanisms
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