

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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**MEDICAL BOARD RELEASES ANNUAL REPORT ON PHYSICIAN DISCIPLINE
BY HOSPITALS**

BOSTON-The Board of Registration in Medicine today released its sixth annual public summary of physician disciplinary actions taken by Massachusetts hospitals. The data released today is a summary of hospital disciplinary actions taken in 1999, as well as a six-year summary.

The 1999 summary shows that 29 of the 123 reporting hospitals (23%) imposed sixty-three actions against forty-five physicians. This represents an increase of seven actions over the number taken in 1998; the number of physicians disciplined also increased by six. Of the sixty-three actions, eighteen (28%) resulted in the revocation or suspension of the physician's privileges, and an additional six (9%) represent the physician's resignation from the hospital. UMass Memorial Medical Center reported the most actions: nine actions taken against six physicians. Several hospitals, including Berkshire Medical Center, Heywood Hospital, Noble Hospital and Saints Memorial Medical Center reported at least one action for the first time since 1994, the first year included in the six year summary.

Mary Anna Sullivan, M.D., Board Chair, stated that the Board will continue to monitor hospitals, as well as other health care facilities, to ensure the timely and accurate reporting of physician discipline. "We expect that hospitals and other health care facilities are fulfilling, and will continue to fulfill, their duties to discipline physicians, where appropriate, and to inform the Board of such disciplinary actions."

Dr. Sullivan noted that the Board has the legal authority to fine hospitals that do not carry out their reporting obligations. She emphasized that health care facility disciplinary action reports are only one source of referral to the Board for potential disciplinary action. Other sources include patient complaints, reports from malpractice insurers and the civil courts, referrals from other government agencies and reports filed by physicians and other health care providers.

The Board, comprised of five physicians and two community representatives, licenses over 30,000 doctors.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Copies of the 1999 and six-year summaries are available by calling the Board's Public Information Officer at (617) 727-3086, ext. 359.