

Executive Director Report



WASHINGTON
**Medical
Commission**
Licensing. Accountability. Leadership.

Thank You for Nine Amazing Years

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Almost nine years ago I became the Executive Director of the WMC and I will retire this September. When I applied for this position, I had been a staff attorney for the Commission seven years prior, so I understood its mission at a very high level. Little did I know that the next nine years would be the most rewarding and challenging of my career. Who would have thought that the medical profession would be part of every front-page issue that came along? I certainly did not – but I quickly learned that my perception of my new role and reality were miles apart.

As this will be my last article as the Executive Director, I wanted to highlight a few accomplishments from the last nine years. Together, the Medical Commission, its wonderful staff, our engaged stakeholders, and you, the professional, have tackled a lot:

- We drafted rules – with your help - to address the opioid epidemic.
- We were recognized as a WellBeing First Champion for 2023 by ensuring our licensure applications are free from intrusive and stigmatizing language around mental health care and treatment. This means that healthcare practitioners can seek needed care without fear of losing their license or job.
- We embraced and pursued diversity, equity and inclusion in all of our work processes and published a [Discrimination in Healthcare Policy](#) – one of the first medical boards in the world to do so. We now routinely screen complaints for discrimination in healthcare and take appropriate action when we find it.
- We implemented a new way to [process cases regarding sexual misconduct](#) and instituted a new requirement that all investigators, staff attorneys and commissioners who are assigned these types of cases first complete Trauma-Informed Sexual Assault Victim training to provide more insight and tools.
- We revamped our website using focus groups to help us tailor it for a variety of users.
- We worked diligently to pass legislation and become part of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact to expedite licensure in multiple states.
- We helped you through the pandemic by pausing your licensing fees, reducing the documents you needed to provide for licensure and by giving you as much grace as possible as you battled COVID-19 for months and months.
- We fought for women's reproductive rights and worked to shield you from sanctions for doing something in another state that is legal in Washington.

On a personal level, I have learned throughout my career with the WMC that you have a very, very tough job. Balancing patients – their personalities and peculiarities – with treatment options, opinions about those options, time crunches, staffing shortages, insurance red tape and on and on must be exhausting. The fact that you get up every day and do it over and over again is a testament to your dedication to care for us humans to the best of your abilities and I applaud you for that.

It has been a joy and a journey to be part of the Washington Medical Commission and I look forward to seeing what transpires in the next nine years.

Washington Medical Commission Recognized for Protecting Practitioner Health

The Washington Medical Commission (WMC) has been recognized as a WellBeing First Champion for 2023 and was honored among only 21 other U.S. states at the Federation of State Medical Boards 2023 Annual Meeting.

To receive this award, a coalition of leading health care organizations has verified that WMC licensure applications are free from intrusive and stigmatizing language around mental health care and treatment. This means that healthcare practitioners can seek needed care without fear of losing their license or job.