



January 23, 2015

Donald Girard, MD
Chair of the Oregon Medical Board
1500 SW 1st Ave., Suite 620
Portland, OR 97201-5847

Re: OMA Support for SB 279

Chair Girard and Members of the Oregon Medical Board,

We wanted to thank you for consulting with the Oregon Medical Association (OMA) in the development of the Oregon Medical Board's proposal through SB 279 to become a semi-independent state agency. After working with you to include a provision that allows the legislature to maintain some oversight of the budget process, we are now in a position to support the current version of the bill.

As you are aware, we have a number of legitimate concerns about shifting a public health and licensing agency to a semi-independent agency. We firmly believe it is critical to ensure continued state oversight of the Board. The public's interest also is better served if individuals remain able to appeal to the legislature with concerns about the Board's proposed budget or fee increases. We understand that there is always risk in a proposal such as the Board's and should the provision not prove to be effective in practice, the OMA will work to bring forth more practical oversight provisions in future legislative sessions.

By extending this greater freedom from bureaucratic requirements, we expect that the Board will have more capacity to deal with issues facing the profession. The OMA also expects that efficiencies and savings derived from the transition to semi-independence should be used to better deliver services to OMB licensees, and we welcome opportunities to engage the Board on issues regarding the Board's performance that are important to our members and the profession overall.

We look forward to continuing our open communication with the Board on this and other issues as we work to improve Board operations and transparency.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Emory, MD
President