

Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners Committee on Physician Assistants



Newsletter



A regulatory agency of the State of Tennessee

Cordell Hull Building, First Floor, 425 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37247-1010

• <http://tennessee.gov/health>

Tennessee Gets High Marks for Bioterrorism Preparedness

State Ranks Among Top Four

Nashville: In a recent report by Trust for America's Health, Tennessee was rated among the top four states for its preparedness efforts to respond to bioterrorism and public health emergencies. "Tennessee has made a great deal of progress towards strengthening our preparedness and capacity to respond rapidly to a bioterrorism threat or other public health emergency, and we are very pleased to be rated among the top states," said Health Commissioner Kenneth Robinson, MD.

The report examined state-by-state how well the public health system is prepared to manage a large-scale emergency. Each state received a score based on ten key indicators which reflect the fundamental capabilities every state should have. The indicators were basically divided into three general categories: funding, public health infrastructure preparedness, and "double duty" preparedness – the ability to leverage resources to respond to both naturally occurring and terrorist threats. Tennessee achieved seven out of the possible ten indicators, the highest score received by any state. Other states with top ratings were California, Florida, and Maryland.

"In Tennessee, state and local agencies, along with our federal partners, work together as a homeland security team. We are pleased to see the bioterrorism preparedness efforts led by the Department of Health, and supported by other agencies and jurisdictions, be recognized. However, we will not rest on our laurels. We are going to continue to improve," said General Jerry Humble, Director, Governor's Office of Homeland Security.

Tennessee received \$20 million federal funding in fiscal year 2002-2003 and \$29.6 million this year to be used for bioterrorism preparedness. The funding has enabled the State to strengthen disease surveillance and reporting systems, hire additional personnel in state and local health departments, improve communications systems and laboratory capacity, and provide training to health care providers, emergency personnel and public health staff.

"The federal bioterrorism funds that we've received have helped us to build a stronger public health system and improve our ability to protect our citizens from biological attacks and infectious disease threats," said Robinson. "Tennessee's strong relationships among state, local and regional health departments have enhanced the state's ability to accomplish a lot in a short period of time."

A portion of the funding is also being used to assist hospitals in their planning and preparedness efforts and to enhance their capability to handle large numbers of casualties. Commissioner Robinson said that the Department of Health will distribute \$8.9 million this year to 133 acute care hospitals for hospital terrorism preparedness. The individual hospital funds are to be used for personal protective equipment for hospital staff, redundant emergency communication systems, added isolation capacities for contagious patients, hospital decontamination units, hospital terrorism staff training, and special kits for emergency rooms to treat patients exposed to chemical agents.

Welcome New Committee Members!

The Committee has several new members. William Blalock was appointed June 17, 2004 to serve until May 31, 2008. Mr. Blalock is a physician assistant practicing in Kingsport, Tennessee. Marcia M. Cole was appointed January 29, 2004 to serve until May 31, 2007. Ms. Cole is also a physician assistant practicing in Nashville, Tennessee. The new citizen member is Ann Arney who was appointed July 17, 2004 and will serve until May 31, 2005. Ms. Arney is from Nashville, Tennessee. Janet L. Johnson was appointed January 29, 2004 and will serve until May 31, 2007. Ms. Johnson is an Orthopaedic Physician Assistant from Soddy Daisy, Tennessee.

2005 COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

January 7, 2005
April 22, 2005
July 8, 2005
October 7, 2005

All committee meetings begin at 9:00 a.m., Central Time. Committee meetings are held at the Committee's office and are open to the public. Dates are subject to change, but are listed on the Committee's website. [In the event of an electronic meeting, a conference room is made available to the public and is the location from which the electronic meeting is conducted.]

Phone Number: 800-778-4123, ext. 24384
Fax Number: 615-253-4484

Public Acts, 2002 Chapter No. 872

(a) It is the intent of the general assembly to promote greater awareness of women to the risks of gynecological cancers by increasing their knowledge of the signs of such types of cancers and the benefits of early detection. The general assembly recognizes the traditional and significant role played by the department of health in educating the public about health issues and their relevance to maintaining a good quality of life for all citizens.

(b) The department of health is directed to develop and implement a statewide initiative to increase awareness of women regarding gynecological cancers. Through the department's office of women's health, the department shall work with other state and federal programs, such as the Tennessee breast and cervical cancer early detection program and the national cervical cancer coalition, to encourage all women to have regular screening examinations and to follow good health practices which may prevent gynecological cancers.

(c) During national cervical health awareness month, the department shall further the public's knowledge and understanding of the signs of gynecological cancers and the importance of early detection through regular examinations by utilizing print, electronic, audio, or other media, as deemed appropriate by the department. The department shall encourage appropriate physicians and other health care providers to actively educate their patients regarding gynecological cancers through dissemination of information about these diseases and their detection and prevention, as well as through participation in the initiative by providing free cervical cancer screening on Free Pap Smear Day. Where feasible, the department shall work with similar national campaigns which are directed toward women's health issues, as well as partner with health care professional organizations and governmental entities to enhance the department's efforts related to gynecological cancers.

Instructions for Accessing the Board's Web Site

- ▶ <http://tennessee.gov/health>
- ▶ Licensing
- ▶ Health Professional Boards
- ▶ Select "Committee on Physician Assistants"



STATUTORY CHANGES

Elder Abuse Prevention

There has been an important change in your practice Act. This year, the General Assembly adopted legislation regarding the abuse of elderly persons and abuse, neglect, and misappropriation of the property of a vulnerable person. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 71, Chapter 6, Part 1, has been amended:

(a) All offices of physicians licensed pursuant to title 63, chapters 6 or 9, all health care facilities licensed pursuant to title 68, chapter 11, all senior centers, all community centers and all pharmacies shall post the following in the main public entrance:

(1) contact information including statewide toll-free number of the division of adult protective services, and the number for the local district attorney's office; and

(2) a statement that a person of advanced age who may be the victim of abuse, neglect, or exploitation may seek assistance or file a complaint with the division concerning abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

(b) The information listed in subsection (a) shall be posted on a sign no smaller than eleven inches (11") in width and seventeen inches (17") in height.

The Tennessee Medical Association has developed a poster which meets the requirements of the new legislation and we are pleased to provide it to you with this Newsletter. I encourage you to post it in the main public entrance of your practice as the law mandate.

Public Chapters, 2004

P.C. 734 – Training School Personnel

Public Chapter 734 allows a local board of education or a governing board for a non-public school to permit school personnel to volunteer to assist with the care of students with diabetes, excluding insulin administration, under the following conditions:

- The student's parent or guardian and the student's personal health care team must have developed a medical management plan that lists the health services needed by the student at school and is signed by the student's **physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant**.
- The student's parent or guardian must have given permission for the school personnel to volunteer to participate in the care of the student with diabetes, and such written permission must be kept in the student's school records.
- Documentation must be maintained as described in Public Chapter 734.
- School registered nurses must train school personnel who volunteer to assist with the care of students with diabetes pursuant to the procedures outlined in the "Guidelines for Use of Health Care Professionals and Health Care Procedure in a School Setting" as amended by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and approved by the Board of Nursing. These guidelines must be utilized uniformly by all local education agencies that choose to allow school personnel to volunteer to assist with the care of students with diabetes.

To read the full text of Public Chapter 734 go to <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/acts/103/pub/pc0734.pdf>

P.C. 678 -Written and Electronic Prescription Orders

In the Medication Error Reduction Act of 2004 the General Assembly created a uniform standard that health care providers must follow in issuing written or electronic prescription orders. This standard is intended to reduce medication related errors, which represent a major source of medical errors in the health care system. By adopting these standards, the general assembly intends to promote medical safety for all patients who are issued drug prescriptions in this state.

Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 19, Part 1, is amended by adding the following:

"§ 63-19-107(2)(G), is amended by adding the following: Any written or electronic prescription order for a drug prepared by a physician assistant who is authorized by law to prescribe a drug must be legibly printed or typed so that it is comprehensible by the pharmacist filling the prescription. The written or electronic prescription order must contain the name of the prescribing physician assistant; the name and strength of the drug prescribed; the quantity of the drug prescribed (written in both letters and numerals); instructions for the proper use of the drug; and the month and day that the prescription was issued (written in letters or in numerals). The prescribing physician assistant must sign the written or electronic prescription order on the day it is issued. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a physician assistant from issuing a verbal prescription order."

To view the entire text of Public Chapter 678 to to <http://www.state.tn.us/sos/acts/103/pub/pc0678.pdf>

P.C. 707 DENTAL/VISION SCREENING

Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-6-5004, is amended by designating the existing language as subsection (a) and by adding the following new subsections:

(b) A health care professional is authorized to indicate the need for a dental or vision screening on any report or form used in relationship to reporting immunization status for a child as required under this part. Health care professionals shall provide a copy of such report or form to the parents or guardians indicating the need to seek appropriate examinations for the child.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS must be reported (in writing or by web) to the Committee's Office within 30 days!

- **Your name and license number;**
- **Your profession;**
- **Your old address and phone number;**
- **Your new address and phone number, e-mail address, and/or your fax number; and**
- **Your SIGNATURE!**

Board's Fax Number: 615-253-4484 or on the Board's Website at tennessee.gov/health.

P.C. 579 – Free Clinic Practice

Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 1, is amended by adding the following as a new appropriately designated part:

Section 63-1-201. As used in this part, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) “Free health clinic” means a health care facility operated by a nonprofit private entity that does not receive payment for its services and does not impose any charges on the individuals to whom services are rendered.

(2) “Medical practitioner” means a:

(A) Physician licensed under Title 63, Chapter 6 or 9;

(B) Dentist or dental hygienist licensed under Title 63, Chapter 5;

(C) Nurse licensed under Title 63, Chapter 7;

(D) Chiropractor licensed under Title 63, Chapter 4;

(E) Psychologist licensed under Title 63, Chapter 11;

(F) Social worker licensed under Title 63, Chapter 24;

and

(G) Physician assistant licensed under Title 63, Chapter 19.

(3) “Special volunteer license” means a license awarded to a medical practitioner whose sole practice is rendering professional services without remuneration in a free health clinic at a specified site or setting. The practitioner must have been previously issued a license to practice in this state or another state and the practitioner must never have been the subject of disciplinary action. The licensing authority shall require an application and relevant documentation before issuing the special volunteer license. No fee may be charged for an application or issuance of the special license.

Section 63-1-202. Medical practitioners, who practice in a free health clinic and who do not receive monetary remuneration for medical care and other services rendered within the statutory scope of practice for such practitioner, shall not be subject to:

(1) Any fees for a special volunteer license from the practitioner’s licensing board; or

(2) The privilege tax on occupations imposed by Title 67, Chapter 4, Part 17. Section 63-1-203. A medical practitioner or a free health clinic may not receive any compensation for services rendered, including, but not limited to, reimbursement from an individual or from any third party payor. Reimbursement may not be accepted from any insurance policy or health plan or federal or state benefits program. A clinic may receive donations and gifts.

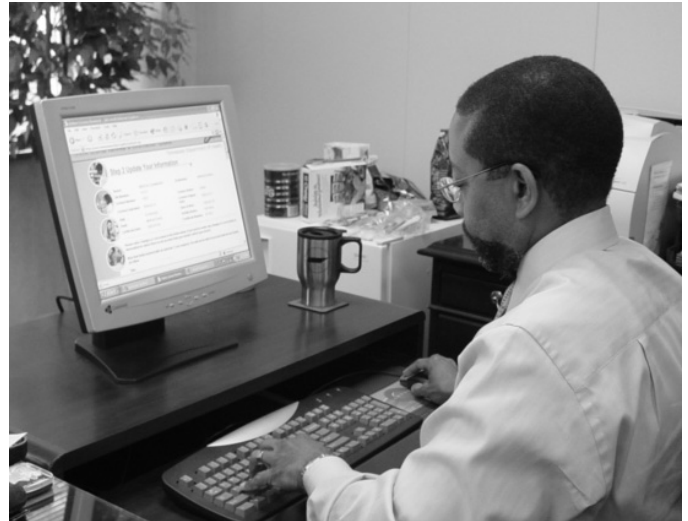
Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 63, Chapter 19, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section to be appropriately designated:

63-19-115. A physician assistant licensed pursuant to this chapter under a special volunteer license who is a medical practitioner, as defined by § 63-1-201, engaged in practice at a free health clinic shall not be subject to

license fees under this chapter. The board of medical examiners and its committee on physician assistants may issue a special volunteer license, as defined in Section 63-1-201, to qualified applicants without fee or charge. Such license shall be for a period of two (2) years and may be renewed on a biennial basis.

It’s Easy to Renew Online
www.tennessee.gov/health

The quickest and easiest way to renew your license and update your information is to do it online! It’s fast, simple, secure, and convenient – and you can pay with a credit card.



Health Commissioner Kenneth Robinson, MD recently renewed his license online and said the whole process took only moments.

Just click on license renewal, and then select your board and profession, enter your profession license number, your birth date and social security number or the transaction number from your renewal notice. Next, you will update your home address, your work address and even your billing address so the Board will have current information.

The next step is to enter your renewal information. You’ll need to answer all necessary questions and provide information on licenses from other states. You’ll have the opportunity to update your education information and list your principal place of employment.

Finally, just enter your payment information. By entering your credit card through the secure site and choosing “submit,” you will have completed the online renewal application. Only choose submit one time!

Your renewal information will be posted to the Department of Health’s licensing system and once you have met all of the criteria for your profession, you will get your renewal certificate in the mail. What could be simpler? Visit our website at tennessee.gov/health!

Health Department Targets Flu Vaccine for High Risk Groups

Others Urged to Forgo Shots This Year

The Tennessee Department of Health will limit flu vaccinations at local health departments to those at highest risk for serious illness from complications of the flu and is recommending that other vaccine providers do the same.

"We call upon everyone to pull together and, for many of us, to sacrifice the opportunity for a flu shot--as I will--in order to help us protect the most vulnerable members of our community in the coming flu season," said Health Commissioner Kenneth Robinson, MD.

The recommendation was prompted by the suspension of the Chiron Corporation's license to produce influenza vaccine, resulting in a 50 percent decrease in this year's vaccine supply. Nationally, about 56 million doses will be available from the remaining vaccine suppliers, Aventis and Medimmune.

"Every year, about 36,000 Americans die of the flu. Nationally, there is only enough vaccine available for about half of the people who are at particularly high risk for severe illness, including small children and elderly people. For this reason, the Tennessee Department of Health strongly recommends that anyone not in a high risk group should not be vaccinated this year," said Dr. Allen Craig, State Epidemiologist. "We have asked doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other providers to vaccinate only those people at high risk, and we are encouraged to see that many flu shot providers are doing just that," Craig said.

Because of the shortage of vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices have made recommendations on how to use the available vaccine to protect people at the highest risk of being hospitalized or dying of complications of the flu. The CDC recommends that the following groups be vaccinated this year:

- All adults aged 65 and over
- All children aged 6-23 months
- Children 2-18 who must take aspirin regularly
- People aged 2-64 years with chronic health conditions (for example, diabetes, heart or lung disease)
- Pregnant women
- Residents of nursing homes and long term care facilities
- Caregivers and those who live with an infant aged less than six months (too young for vaccine)
- Health care workers who provide hands-on patient care

Health departments across Tennessee ordered approximately 200,000 doses of vaccine this year, with about one-third of that ordered from Chiron. Some of the vaccine ordered by the state health department will be redistributed to those health departments that would otherwise not have vaccine. Most health department flu clinics dates are yet to be set because only a small amount of the remaining vaccine has been delivered to date. Health departments will make local announcements as flu clinic dates are set. People who need to be vaccinated should look locally for available vaccine from private providers or the county health department and should not put off getting vaccinated when vaccine is available.

"Even without a flu shot, there are important steps you can take to protect yourself and others from the flu this winter," said Dr. Craig. "Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Most importantly, stay home from work or school if you are sick."

Disciplinary Action

Brock, Ron 476, 7/23/03 – *Order Modification.* The Respondent shall enter into and maintain a five-year contract with the Tennessee Peer Assistance Program (TNPAP). The civil penalty assessment shall be reduced to eight thousand three hundred and fifty dollars (\$8,350) upon successful completion of the five-year TNPAP contract if there has been no breach of that contract. If a breach of the TNPAP contract occurs at anytime during its five-year existence, the full \$16,700 civil penalty will be assessed. The Respondent must complete payment of the civil penalties by the end of the five-year TNPAP contract. The respondent will present a copy of this Order, as modified to TNPAP and to any other agencies or individuals involved in the treatment pursuant to the TNPAP contract.

Stanton, Don P. 149, 5/20/04 – *Violation of Prior Board Order.* Probation extended 2 years with the requirement that he attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings and maintain the advocacy of the Tennessee Medical Foundation.

NOTIFICATION TO COMMITTEE

Each physician assistant shall notify the committee of the name, address, and license number of the physician assistant's primary supervising physician and shall notify the committee of any change in such primary supervising physician within fifteen (15) days of the change. TCA 63-19-107(1).

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