

# REENTRY TO PRACTICE

*Report of the FSMB Workgroup on Reentry to Practice  
Draft, January 2024*

## **Executive Summary**

Physicians may take a leave from practice for a variety of reasons, necessitating reentry. The following document contains guidance for state medical boards when considering potential reentry to practice requirements for physicians seeking to regain licensure following a significant absence from practice. Recommendations offered in the document reflect an appreciation that unique situations exist for physicians (and includes physician assistants) seeking to reenter practice and therefore we encourage flexibility and the need to consider reentry decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Key considerations for state medical boards in reentry decisions include:

- the duration of time out of practice;
- clinical and other relevant activities engaged in by the physician while out of practice;
- the need for assessment of a physician's competence prior to reentry to practice;
- reentry during public health emergencies;
- collection of data about the clinical activity of the licensee population;
- the variety of challenges faced by physicians seeking to reenter practice;
- instances where absence from practice occurs to manage potentially impairing illness;
- differing reentry requirements where absence from practice occurs as a result of state medical board disciplinary proceedings or criminal conviction;
- mentoring and supervision for reentering physicians; and
- differing requirements when retraining is required due to a change in scope of practice or a lack of training or experience in the physician's intended scope of practice.

The following recommendations are included for state medical boards:

- 1) State medical boards should proactively communicate with and educate licensees/applicants about the issues associated with reentering clinical practice.
- 2) Reentry to practice decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis.
- 3) All licensees/applicants returning to clinical practice after a period of inactivity should be required to provide a detailed description of their future scope of practice plans.
- 4) State medical boards and licensees/applicants who have been clinically inactive should agree upon a reentry to practice plan acceptable to the state medical board. Applicants should provide proof of completion of the plan prior to reentry.
- 5) State medical boards should foster collaborative relationships with academic institutions, community hospital training centers, state medical societies, and state chapters of specialty societies to develop and ensure the availability of assessment, educational and other interventions and resources for the various types of practices.
- 6) Supervisory arrangements for reentering physicians should be approved by state medical boards. Where formal supervision is not required, mentorship may be arranged by

46 reentering physicians. State medical boards should make efforts to ensure a sufficient pool  
47 of supervisors and mentors is available to reentering physicians.

48 7) State medical boards should require licensees to report information about their practice as  
49 part of the license renewal process, including type of practice, status, whether they are  
50 actively seeing patients, specialty board certification status, and what activities they are  
51 engaged in if they are not engaged in clinical practice.

52 8) Licensees who are clinically inactive should be allowed to maintain their licensure status  
53 provided they meet the requirements set forth by the state medical board. Depending on a  
54 licensee's engagement in activities designed to maintain clinical competence, should the  
55 licensee choose to return to active clinical practice, the board may require participation in  
56 a reentry program.

57 9) State medical boards should be consistent in the creation and execution of reentry  
58 programs.  
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60 **Introduction**

61  
62 In April 2012, the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) adopted the *Report of the Special*  
63 *Committee on Reentry to Practice (2012)*. The following year, the FSMB adopted the *Report of*  
64 *the Special Committee on Reentry for the Ill Physician (2013)*. At the time of their adoption, the  
65 two reports addressed current regulatory challenges associated with physician reentry to practice,  
66 while recognizing that there was a paucity of research surrounding the issue. Despite minimal  
67 advance in research, widespread recognition has since developed that physicians may take a  
68 temporary absence from clinical practice for a variety of reasons, and physician reentry can be a  
69 common part of a physician’s continuing practice of medicine.

70  
71 Jeffrey D. Carter, MD, Chair of the FSMB, appointed the Workgroup on Reentry to Practice in  
72 May 2023 to update and bring current FSMB policies related to reentry to practice for state medical  
73 and osteopathic boards (hereinafter referred to as “state medical boards” and/or “medical boards”).  
74 The Workgroup was charged with conducting a comprehensive review of state medical and  
75 osteopathic board rules, regulations and policies related to reentry to practice; conducting a review  
76 and evaluation of FSMB policies, including *Reentry to Practice (HOD 2012)* and *Reentry for the*  
77 *Ill Physician (HOD 2013)* and specifically the recommendations regarding out of practice  
78 timelines based on current evidence; conducting a literature review of related research, guidelines  
79 and other publications and the impact of demographic changes in the physician workforce on  
80 licensure and practice; identifying available educational resources and activities for physicians to  
81 positively impact their ability to demonstrate their fitness to reenter the workforce; and identifying  
82 options for competency assessment tools for state medical boards to evaluate physicians’ fitness  
83 to reenter the workforce.

84  
85 In meeting its charge, the Workgroup also surveyed medical boards to better understand the current  
86 priorities and procedures related to the departure and reentry to practice. Survey results indicated  
87 that reentry to practice is a high priority for medical boards. Results also indicated that 57 percent  
88 of responding medical boards ask licensees, whether during license renewal or another mechanism,  
89 if they are actively clinically practicing. However, a greater number of medical boards (69 percent  
90 of respondents) reported not collecting data on the number of medical professionals who left  
91 clinical practice and applied for reentry.

92  
93 The results of the survey helped guide Workgroup discussions, as did the involvement of a subject  
94 matter expert with extensive experience working in assessment and training of physicians  
95 reentering practice. These also helped inform the Workgroup’s decision that *Reentry to Practice*  
96 and *Reentry for the Ill Physician* should be combined into one document, as did FSMB’s recent  
97 experience working with state medical boards on the issue of physician well-being. This report,  
98 and recommendations, are intended to serve as a framework for common reentry standards and  
99 processes. These recommendations are also intended to provide flexibility for state medical boards  
100 and physician and physician assistant licensees/applicants.

101  
102 The recommendations provided in this report are organized as follows:

- 103 • Education and Communication
- 104 • Determining Medical Fitness to Reenter Practice
- 105 • Supervision and Mentoring for Practitioners Who Want to Reenter the Workforce

- Improving Regulation of Licensed Practitioners Who are Clinically Inactive

### Section One. Glossary

The Workgroup presents the following glossary to support a common interpretation of key terms related to reentry to practice.

“Absence from Practice” means any duration of time that a physician voluntarily takes an absence from providing direct, consultative, or supervisory patient care. Some absences from practice may require a medical board-approved reentry process, whereas absences of shorter duration or absences that include activities aimed at maintaining competence may not. Unless otherwise specified, an absence from practice does not include absences that result from medical board disciplinary action.

“Clinically Active Practice” means a physician who, at the time of license renewal, is engaged in direct, consultative, or supervisory patient care, or as further defined by the states.

“Mentoring” means a dynamic, reciprocal relationship in a work environment between two individuals where, often but not always, one is an experienced physician in active practice and the other is a physician reentering practice. The peer-relationship is aimed at providing the physician reentering practice with knowledge and resources to support safe reentry. This relationship is distinct from a supervisory relationship in that the mentor plays a supportive role but does not have a specific reporting responsibility to the medical board beyond that which would exist in any clinical context.

“Physician Reentry” means a return to clinical practice in the discipline in which one has been trained or certified following an extended period of clinical inactivity not resulting from medical board disciplinary action. Physician reentry is distinct from remediation or retraining.

“Physician Reentry Program” means a formal, structured curriculum and clinical experience which prepares a physician to return to clinical practice following an extended period of clinical inactivity.

“Physician Retraining” means the process of learning the necessary skills to move into a new clinical area that is distinct from the area of one’s primary medical training. Physician retraining is distinct from physician reentry.

“Supervision” means a medical board-mandated process whereby a supervisor physician, who has been actively practicing for at least the five prior consecutive years, observes a physician reentering practice for a defined period and provides feedback, educational, and clinical support. The support is aimed at ensuring safe reentry to practice. This relationship is distinct from a mentor relationship in that the supervisor has a defined responsibility to the medical board for assessing the reentering physician’s fitness to practice independently. For physician assistants, the role of supervisor may be fulfilled by the supervising physician.

152 **Section Two. Key Issues**

153  
154 The Workgroup identified several key issues relevant to state medical board decisions about  
155 reentry to practice.

156  
157 Timeframe

158 More than two years away from practice is commonly accepted as the timeframe for when  
159 physicians should go through a reentry process. The two-year timeframe is based on extensive  
160 state medical board experience and subject matter expertise in physician assessment and  
161 remediation. The Workgroup recognizes the need for flexibility when applying the two-years-  
162 absent-from-practice timeframe to an individual physician, as there is great variability in specialty,  
163 type of practice, and clinical and educational engagement while absent from practice.

164  
165 When determining whether a physician requires a reentry to practice program, a medical board  
166 may choose to consider the following factors:

- 167
- 168 • administrative or consultative activity (e.g., chart reviews);
  - 169 • concordance of prior and intended scopes of practice;
  - 170 • educational or mentoring responsibilities;
  - 171 • intention to perform procedures upon reentry;
  - 172 • length of time in practice prior to departure;
  - 173 • participation in accredited continuing medical education and/or volunteer activities during  
174 the time out of practice;
  - 175 • participation in continuous certification<sup>1</sup> prior to departure from practice;
  - 176 • prior disciplinary history;
  - 177 • time since completion of post-graduate training; and
  - 178 • whether absence from practice resulted from disciplinary action or criminal conviction

179 Assessment of Fitness to Reenter Practice

180 It is the responsibility of state medical boards to determine whether a licensee/applicant who has  
181 had an absence from practice should demonstrate whether they are competent to reenter practice.  
182 The assessment, as well as the assessment modality or modalities may be tailored to the individual.  
183 If it is not immediately clear what needs to be assessed as part of the licensee’s fitness to practice,  
184 state medical boards are encouraged to seek the expertise of assessment organizations with  
185 experience in this area.<sup>2</sup> Boards may recommend that clinically inactive physicians proactively  
186 complete a self-assessment prior to reentering practice to identify any clinical deficiencies as this  
187 may be valuable in determining board-mandated reentry requirements.

188  
189 Public Health Emergencies

190 During public health emergencies, state medical boards may recognize the need to, and choose to,  
191 implement temporary licensure modifications and waivers allowing clinically inactive physicians  
192 to reenter practice. When doing so, medical boards should utilize mechanisms that can quickly  
193 identify and verify credentials of health professionals to ensure patient safety and maintain

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<sup>1</sup> The Workgroup recognizes that at the time of drafting, some specialty certifying boards continue to use the term “Maintenance of Certification” to describe this process.

<sup>2</sup> FSMB, Directory of Physician Assessment and Remedial Education Programs. October 2023, available at: <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/spex/pdfs/remedprog.pdf>.

194 oversight of licensure waivers that fall outside medical board control. If a clinically inactive  
195 physician chooses to practice beyond the public health emergency, they must complete the  
196 appropriate reentry program determined by the state medical board. Boards are encouraged to  
197 make licensees aware of Provider Bridge so they may choose to register as potential volunteers in  
198 advance of future public health emergencies.  
199

#### 200 State Medical Board Data Collection on Clinical Activity

201 State medical boards should consider means of collecting information from licensees about their  
202 clinical activity to understand workforce demographics. While some state medical boards will be  
203 limited in their capacity to collect data on licensee clinical activity, they may wish to consider  
204 alternative means to collecting this on licensing applications such as optional surveys to licensees.  
205 This can be particularly important for understanding the degree to which active licensees are not  
206 clinically active, and may inform reentry decisions for this population.  
207

#### 208 Challenges to Reentry

209 There are difficulties associated with identifying entities that provide reentry services to  
210 physicians. These include cost, geographic considerations, eligibility requirements, licensure,  
211 malpractice issues and lack of uniformity among alternatives available to physicians seeking  
212 reentry. While some of these challenges are outside the purview of state medical boards, others  
213 can be mitigated by boards, including requirements for mentors, rather than supervisors, and the  
214 ability to obtain a training license. State medical boards may choose to review their current  
215 practices to avoid undue burdens or barriers to reentry, while being mindful of patient safety  
216 considerations. Boards may proactively choose to communicate these challenges to licensees so  
217 that they can plan accordingly when an absence from practice is anticipated.

- 218 • *Cost and duration of reentry programs*: Due to the time and resources required to  
219 effectively assess and support a physician through a reentry process, reentry programs are,  
220 of necessity, costly. However, they are an essential mechanism to inform state medical  
221 board decisions about reentry requirements in the interest of patient safety.
- 222 • *Accessibility of reentry programs*: There is a wide range of entities<sup>3</sup> that offer reentry  
223 services, ranging in remediation programs to mini residencies. Accessibility may vary  
224 depending on the needs of the reentering physician and the geographic location of reentry  
225 programs. However, as some services are being offered online, accessibility is improving.
- 226 • *Availability of mentors and supervisors*: It may be challenging for medical boards to  
227 identify and select mentors and supervisors based on the needs of the reentering physician,  
228 due to various reasons, including geographical location or specialty. Boards may develop  
229 a roster of mentors and supervisors that would serve in these roles for reentering physicians.  
230 Recruitment may occur through questions on renewal applications or through advertising  
231 in board publications.
- 232 • *Ability to obtain a training license (and engage in clinical activity without a full and  
233 unrestricted license)*: As many medical board-approved programs necessitate clinical  
234 training which includes direct patient care, a training license is required. However, this  
235 license type is not offered in all states. Boards may choose to evaluate whether their  
236 existing license types include a license that permits reentering physicians to practice within

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

237 their reentry program. Possible license types may include a limited or special purpose  
238 license, temporary license, or a resident license.

- 239 • *Medical Liability Insurance and Hospital Credentialing/Privileging*: In many jurisdictions  
240 it is not possible to obtain liability insurance without first obtaining a medical license. As  
241 mentioned previously, because of this requirement, medical boards may again choose to  
242 evaluate whether their existing license types include a license that permits reentering  
243 physicians to practice and subsequently obtain liability insurance. It is also not possible to  
244 obtain hospital privileges without first obtaining a license or liability insurance.

245

#### 246 Impairment

247 The terms “illness” and “impairment” are not synonymous. Illness is the term used to describe the  
248 existence of a disease state. It can be physical or psychiatric and can include addictive disease,  
249 injury, and cognitive change. Impairment, however, is a functional classification that implies the  
250 inability of the person affected by illness or injury to provide medical care with reasonable skill  
251 and safety.<sup>4</sup>

252

253 A physician who is or has been ill is not necessarily impaired and may be able to function  
254 effectively and practice safely, especially with participation in relevant treatment programs and  
255 ongoing monitoring, where appropriate. Therefore, the same set of reentry requirements and  
256 programs should be available to this population of physicians seeking reentry. State medical boards  
257 may familiarize themselves with the FSMB’s *Policy on Physician Illness and Impairment* (HOD,  
258 2021), as well as resources available in their state, such as the state’s Physician Health Program.

259

#### 260 Mentoring and Supervision of Reentry Physicians

261 Academic Medical Centers (AMCs) and Community Hospital Training Centers have a role in  
262 physician reentry as they already have the facilities, faculty, and resources to effectively perform  
263 assessment and training. AMCs and Community Hospital Training Centers can provide a complete  
264 reentry package from initial assessment of the reentry physician to final evaluation of competence  
265 and performance in practice. AMCs can provide selected services on an as-needed basis such as  
266 assessment testing, focused practice-based learning, procedure labs and identifying and vetting  
267 mentors and supervisors. Potential incentives to stimulate AMC involvement in reentry include  
268 research opportunities and generation of revenue.

269

#### 270 Maintaining Licensure if Not in Active Clinical Practice

271 Some states consider the work done and decisions made by medical directors of health care  
272 programs to be the practice of medicine and therefore they are required to have an active license.  
273 Other states issue administrative medicine licenses as a distinct area of practice, which includes  
274 consultations and other educational functions that are non-clinical in nature. These types of  
275 licenses do not include the authority to practice clinical medicine, examine, care for, or treat  
276 patients, prescribe medications including controlled substances, or delegate medical acts or  
277 prescriptive authority to others.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> FSMB, *Policy on Physician Illness and Impairment: Towards a Model that Optimizes Patient Safety and Physician Health*. May 2021, available at: <https://www.fsmb.org/siteassets/advocacy/policies/policy-on-physician-impairment.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Iowa Code Ann. § 148.11A.

279 Retraining When Practice Differs or is Modified from Area of Primary Training  
280 Some physicians who seek reentry want to practice in a specialty or area that differs from their  
281 area of primary training. In such cases, it is considered retraining, not reentry, and would require  
282 the physician to complete the necessary educational and training requirements for the new  
283 specialty. An obstetrician/gynecologist wishing to practice family medicine would fall into this  
284 category and require retraining. A physician seeking to narrow their primary area of practice,  
285 however, would not need to complete retraining, such as when an obstetrician/gynecologist wishes  
286 to limit their practice to only gynecology.

287  
288 **Section Three. Recommendations**  
289  
290 The following recommendations are intended to provide state medical boards, licensees, health  
291 insurers, physician health programs, health care organizations, and state government agencies with  
292 a framework for developing common standards and terminology around the reentry process.

293  
294 Education and Communication  
295 ***Recommendation 1: Proactive communications***  
296 To help prepare licensees/applicants who either are thinking about taking a leave of absence or are  
297 considering returning to clinical practice, state medical boards should proactively educate  
298 licensees/applicants about ways to maintain competence while absent from practice and the issues  
299 associated with reentering clinical practice (e.g., continued participation in CME activities while  
300 out of practice, unintended consequences of taking a leave of absence such as impact on  
301 malpractice costs and future employment). For example, state medical boards could develop  
302 written guidance on issues like the importance of engaging in clinical practice, if even on a limited,  
303 part-time basis, or seeking counsel from their insurance carriers prior to withdrawal from practice  
304 and when they are ready to reenter practice. They might also suggest that the licensee/applicant  
305 review the FSMB Roadmap for Those Considering Temporarily Leaving Practice (See Appendix  
306 A). State medical boards could include such information with the initial license, with the license  
307 renewal application, in the board’s newsletter, and on the board’s website. This may also help  
308 physicians who are contemplating retirement but are unaware that a reentry process may be  
309 required by their state medical board if they change their mind.

310  
311 Determining Medical Fitness to Reenter Practice  
312 ***Recommendation 2: Review on a case-by-case basis***  
313 Because competence is maintained in part through continuous engagement in patient care  
314 activities, licensees/applicants seeking to return to clinical work after an absence from practice  
315 should be considered on a case- by-case basis. Absences from practice of two years or greater are  
316 generally accepted as the minimum timeframe for when physicians should be required to engage  
317 in a reentry process. However, decisions about whether the licensee/applicant should demonstrate  
318 readiness to reenter practice should be based on a global review of the licensee/applicant’s  
319 situation, including:

- 320 • administrative or consultative activity (e.g., chart reviews);
- 321 • concordance of prior and intended scopes of practice;
- 322 • educational or mentoring responsibilities;
- 323 • intention to perform procedures upon reentry;
- 324 • length of time in practice prior to departure;



- 325 • participation in accredited continuing medical education and/or volunteer activities during
- 326 the time out of practice;
- 327 • participation in continuous certification prior to departure from practice;
- 328 • prior disciplinary history;
- 329 • time since completion of post-graduate training; and
- 330 • whether absence from practice resulted from disciplinary action or criminal conviction

331  
332 Licensees/applicants who wish to take some time away from clinical practice should be  
333 encouraged to remain clinically active in some, even if limited, capacity, and urged to participate  
334 in continuing medical education and continuous certification.

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336 ***Recommendation 3: Documentation***

337 All licensees/applicants returning to clinical practice after a period of inactivity should be required  
338 to provide a detailed description of their future scope of practice plans. The degree of  
339 documentation required may vary depending on the length of time away from clinical practice and  
340 whether the licensee/applicant's scope of practice is consistent with their medical education and  
341 training. For example, documented evidence might include CME certificates and verification of  
342 volunteer activities.

343  
344 A physician returning to a scope or area of practice in which they previously trained or certified,  
345 or in which they previously had an extensive work history may need reentry. A physician returning  
346 to clinical work in an area or scope of practice in which they have not previously trained or certified  
347 or in which they have not had an extensive work history needs retraining and, for the purposes of  
348 this report, is not considered a reentry physician. The reentering licensee/applicant should also be  
349 required to provide information regarding the environment within which they will be practicing,  
350 the types of patients they anticipate seeing, and the types of clinical activities in which they will  
351 be engaged.

352  
353 ***Recommendation 4: Reentry plan after extended time out of practice***

354 State medical boards and licensees/applicants who have been clinically inactive should agree upon  
355 a reentry to practice plan based on various considerations, which may include a self-assessment  
356 by the licensee/applicant, assessment of the licensee/applicant's knowledge and skills, and any  
357 activities completed during the absence from practice. The state medical board has final approval  
358 of the reentry plan and the licensee/applicant should be required to present proof of completion of  
359 the plan to the state medical board.

360  
361 In instances where reentry plans require activities involving direct patient care, state medical  
362 boards may consider whether their existing license types allow for the reentering physician to  
363 practice. Such licenses permit the licensee/applicant to participate in activities necessary to regain  
364 the knowledge and skills needed to provide safe patient care, such as participation in a mini  
365 residency.

366  
367 ***Recommendation 5: State medical board collaborative relationships***

368 State medical boards should foster collaborative relationships with academic institutions,  
369 community hospital training centers, state medical societies, and state chapters of specialty  
370 societies to develop assessment, educational and other interventions and resources for the various

371 types of practices. The National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners, the National Board of  
372 Medical Examiners, the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Osteopathic  
373 Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialties, and the American Medical Association may  
374 likewise serve in a supportive role to state medical boards in this regard. These institutions and  
375 organizations may have readily adaptable programs or simulation centers that meet the individual  
376 needs of reentering physicians.

377

#### 378 Supervision and Mentoring for Practitioners Who Want to Reenter the Workforce

##### 379 ***Recommendation 6: State medical board-approved supervisors and mentors***

380 Supervisors may be selected by either the state medical board or the licensee/applicant, but in all  
381 cases should be approved by the state medical board. At a minimum, the supervisor should be  
382 ABMS or AOA board certified, have no prior disciplinary history, and practice in the same clinical  
383 area as the licensee/applicant seeking reentry.

384

385 The state medical board should set forth in writing its expectations of the supervisor, including  
386 what aspects of the reentering licensee/applicant's practice are to be supervised, frequency and  
387 content of reports by the supervisor to the state medical board, and how long the practice is to be  
388 supervised. The board's expectations should be communicated both to the supervisor and the  
389 licensee/applicant being supervised. For physician assistants, the role of supervisor may be  
390 fulfilled by the supervising physician.

391

392 The supervisor should be required to demonstrate to the medical board's satisfaction that they have  
393 the capacity to serve as a supervisor, for example, sufficient time for supervising, lack of  
394 disciplinary history, proof of an active, unrestricted medical license, and demonstration of having  
395 actively practiced for at least the prior five consecutive years. The supervisor may be permitted to  
396 receive financial compensation or incentives for work associated with supervision. Potential  
397 sources of bias should be identified, and in some cases may disqualify a potential supervisor from  
398 acting in that capacity.

399

400 The licensee/applicant reentering practice should establish a peer-mentorship with an actively  
401 practicing physician who meets the requirements of a supervising physician, but the mentor does  
402 not require medical board approval or reporting beyond that which would typically exist in any  
403 clinical context.

404

405 State medical boards should work with state medical and osteopathic societies and associations  
406 and the medical education community to identify and increase the pool of potential supervisors  
407 and mentors. To protect the pool of supervisors, boards may make supervisors agents of the board.

408

#### 409 Improving Regulation of Licensed Practitioners Who are Clinically Inactive

##### 410 ***Recommendation 7: Identifying clinically inactive licensees***

411 State medical boards should require licensees to report information about their practice as part of  
412 the license renewal process, including type of practice, status (e.g., full-time, part-time, number of  
413 hours worked per week), whether they are actively seeing patients, specialty board certification  
414 status, and what activities they are engaged in if they are not engaged in clinical practice (e.g.,  
415 research, administration, non-medical work, retired, etc.). Such information will enable state  
416 medical boards to identify licensees who are not clinically active and to intervene and guide, as

417 needed, if a licensee chooses to return to patient care duties. State medical boards should advise  
418 licensees who are clinically inactive of their responsibility to participate in an individualized,  
419 diagnostic reentry plan prior to resuming patient care duties.

420

421 ***Recommendation 8: Licensure status***

422 Licensees who are clinically inactive should be allowed to maintain their licensure status if they  
423 pay the required fees and complete any required continuing medical education or other  
424 requirements as set forth by the medical board. Depending on a licensee's engagement in activities  
425 designed to maintain clinical competence, should the licensee choose to return to active clinical  
426 practice, the board may require participation in a reentry program.

427

428 ***Recommendation 9: Consistency of reentry across jurisdictions***

429 State medical boards should be consistent in the creation and execution of reentry programs. In  
430 recognition of the differences in resources, statutes, and operations across states, and  
431 acknowledging that implementation of physician reentry should be within the discretion and  
432 purview of each board, these guidelines are designed to be flexible to meet local considerations.  
433 However, physicians may reasonably be concerned about an overly burdensome reentry process  
434 where they might have to meet varying criteria to obtain licensure in different states. For purposes  
435 of license portability, FSMB will continue to track the implementation of these guidelines to  
436 facilitate transparency for licensees and encourage consistency among boards.

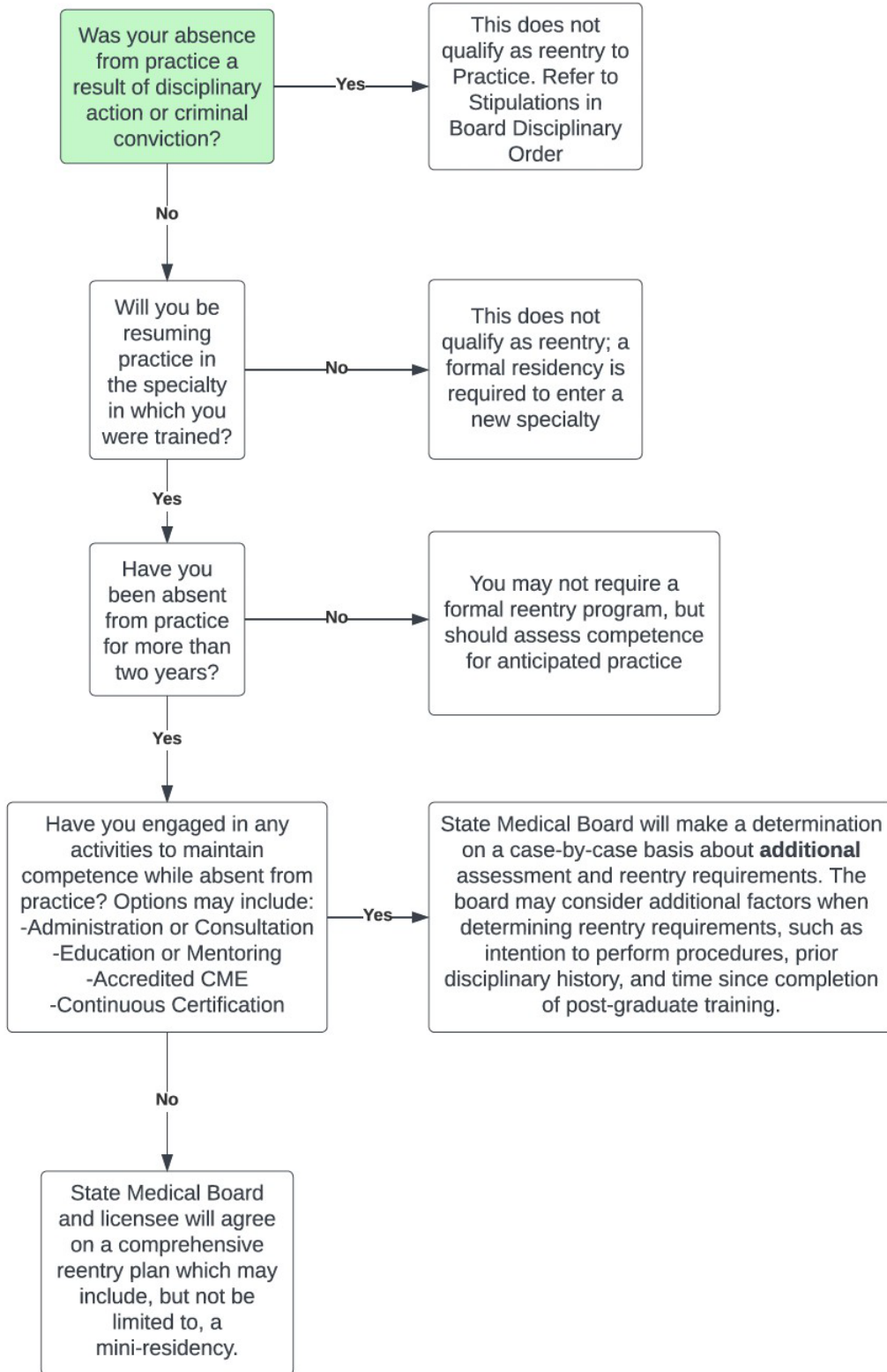
437

438 **Conclusion**

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440 Since the FSMB's *Reentry to Practice (2012)*, there has been widespread recognition that  
441 physicians may take a temporary absence from clinical practice for a variety of reasons, and  
442 physician reentry can be a normal part of a physician's continuing practice of medicine. State  
443 medical boards should create standardized processes for reentry to practice that allow flexibility  
444 for the board and for the licensee/applicant, while also ensuring patient safety. In creating reentry  
445 programs, state medical boards should rely on, and collaborate with, the broader medical system  
446 for education, training, and supervision and mentorship.

447 **Appendix A. FSMB Roadmap for Those Considering Temporarily Leaving Practice**



449 Appendix B. Additional policy resources related to physician health, illness and impairment, and  
450 physician reentry to practice

- 451 1. AMA: [Resources for physicians returning to clinical practice, definition of physician](#)  
452 [impairment, Resources for Physician Health](#)
- 453 2. AOA: [Resources for Physician Wellness](#)
- 454 3. CMSS/Specialty Society: [CMSS Position on Physician Reentry \(11/11\)](#)
- 455 4. FSPHP: [Public Policy Statement : Physician Illness vs. Impairment](#)
- 456 5. ACOG: [Re-entering the Practice of Obstetrics and Gynecology](#)

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468  
469 Lawrence J. Epstein, MD  
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491 President, Missouri Board of Registration for the Healing Arts  
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