



For Immediate Release: July 6, 2017

Contact: Joe Knickrehm, (202) 601-7803

jknickrehm@fsmb.org; www.fsmb.org

FSMB Releases Recommendations on Improving Information-Sharing and Reporting

Washington, D.C. (July 6, 2017) – The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) released a comprehensive summary and recommendations today from a summit meeting it hosted earlier this year to discuss how diverse organizations compile and share information about health care practitioners – including unprofessional conduct and disciplinary issues – and how such information could be better utilized to protect the public.

During the full-day meeting, held in Washington, D.C. in February, more than 30 representatives of various health-sector stakeholder organizations gathered to exchange ideas and insights on the obligation of individuals and institutions to step forward to share information that impacts public well-being – often referred to as “the duty to report.”

The summary, available on the FSMB website, is titled [*Duty to Report: Protecting Patients by Improving the Reporting and Sharing of Information about Health Care Practitioners.*](#)

“The observations and recommendations in this summary are intended to help advance both dialogue and action on a topic of great importance in our health care system,” said FSMB Chair Gregory B. Snyder, MD. “Improving the conditions for patient safety and public protection requires transparency and openness in the reporting and sharing of information, and everyone in health care has a role to play in ensuring this happens – from health practitioners and organizations to patients and families.”

In small- and large-group sessions, participants examined the impediments that can keep physicians, nurses, office staff – as well as patients and families – from stepping forward to report unprofessional conduct or share other information that could impact patient safety. Among issues discussed included:

- Professional cultures and norms that inhibit transparency
- Lack of incentives and accountability
- Lack of awareness and understanding
- Cultural stigmas

- Inconsistency in standards for confidentiality and anonymity that may contribute to individuals' decision-making.

In other sessions, participants examined institutional reporting and information-sharing – how key data is currently shared by diverse organizations – and hurdles that impede better access to, and usage of, data impacting public protection. Among the issues discussed included:

- Lack of data integration and coordination across sectors
- Limited resources
- Differing attitudes on institutional responsibility for data collection
- Jurisdictional and legal restrictions
- Workforce disparities
- Procedural and policy hurdles within physician organizations, hospitals, government agencies and others

Participants identified potential solutions to these barriers and challenges in a wide-ranging large group session to conclude the summit. They targeted eight areas for action in which steps could be taken within their respective organizations, or in groups, to address issues in reporting and information-sharing. These recommended action steps range from transforming workplace cultural attitudes and providing better reporting tools and resources, to building stronger information-sharing partnerships across diverse organizational sectors.

To read a copy of the full report and all potential solutions discussed, please click [here](#).

About the Federation of State Medical Boards

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. The FSMB serves as the voice for state medical boards, supporting them through education, assessment, research and advocacy while providing services and initiatives that promote patient safety, quality health care and regulatory best practices. To learn more about FSMB, visit www.fsmb.org. You can also follow FSMB on Twitter ([@theFSMB](https://twitter.com/theFSMB)).

###