

## Nomination for AIMS “Best of Boards” Practices

### Collaborative Practice Seminars

Developed by Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

In addition to the mission of the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners (ABME) to protect the health and safety of patients and to inform and educate both patients and practitioners, the ABME is committed to assisting other regulatory agencies and at the same time finding ways to increase its own efficiency. To this end, the ABME has partnered with the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the Alabama Board of Nursing to present periodic seminars for physicians and advanced practice nurses who are involved in or considering a collaborative practice agreement. The ABME is pleased to nominate this seminar, entitled “Ensuring Quality in the Collaborative Practice: Working Together to Deliver Quality Healthcare,” for the Administrators in Medicine’s 2011 Best of Boards Award.

#### Introduction

In 1996, the ABME, jointly with the Board of Nursing, developed administrative rules that regulate collaborative practices between physicians and Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs) or Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs). The rules detail how a collaborative practice is established and what is required for medical direction, oversight and quality monitoring.

In the early 2000s, the ABME became aware of indications of a lack of oversight and direction on the part of some physicians in collaborative practices that could affect the quality of care of the

patients. In response, the ABME created a program of inspections to monitor physicians' compliance with the rules, including the required oversight and quality monitoring documentation. Nurse inspectors began making random, unannounced visits to practice sites to review documentation and charts, providing the physician with a report including any irregularities, and making a follow up visit. Physicians were given notice that these inspections were commencing and that there would be a grace period during which collaborative practices would have the opportunity to come into compliance with the rules without suffering adverse consequences from the ABME.

Violations of the collaborative practice rules, especially those requiring documented quality monitoring, were found in about 80% of the collaborative practices. As time progressed and common violations continued to be found, the ABME decided to implement a series of presentations for physicians, nurse practitioners and other staff involved in collaborative practices to assist practitioners in conforming with the rules.

### Implementation

Physician members of the ABME, the ABME Collaborative Practices Inspectors, representatives of the Board of Nursing, and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama developed an educational program to plainly present the "do's and don'ts" for ensuring quality and compliance with the rules for collaborative practice. The State Medical Association's involvement to date has ensured *AMA PRA Category I Credits*<sup>TM</sup> for those physicians in attendance and approved CEU credit for the nurses. In addition to the formal presentations, there are times for question and answer sessions and one-on-one time with the presenters. Attendees are encouraged to schedule a courtesy visit by a

Collaborative Practice Inspector to ensure they are in compliance with the rules.

The seminars were first presented in 2007. They were offered at various dates and times throughout the state. As of this date, nine (9) seminars have been conducted with over 1000 attendees, consisting of physicians, nurse practitioners and other office and/or staff members in attendance. There are three seminars currently scheduled for 2011.

### Conclusion

The number of attendees at the seminars and the number of requests for courtesy visits indicates that these seminars have been helpful and beneficial. As an added benefit, the seminars' success provided motivation for the development of another education series sponsored by the ABME and state medical association, "Prescribing and Pharmacology of Controlled Drugs: Critical Issues and Common Pitfalls." This seminar has also been a great success as it is presented around the state. With these educational seminars, the practitioners are provided information and assistance in complying with the rules, and the ABME has the opportunity to be proactive in ensuring the quality and safety of medical care rendered to the patients of the state of Alabama.