



Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Office of the Secretary

PAT QUINN
Governor

MANUEL FLORES
Acting Secretary

Dear Healthcare Provider:

Please be advised that effective January 15, 2013, the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Medical Unit ("Department") will reduce its head count from 26 to eight employees. The Department has worked tirelessly to avoid these lay-offs, which will negatively impact the medical profession.

Beginning in the summer of 2012 and continuing through January 8, 2013, the Department repeatedly informed the Illinois State Medical Society ("ISMS") that it required an infusion of \$9.6 million to avoid the significant reduction in personnel. On multiple occasions, the Department informed ISMS of the dire consequences of allowing these layoffs to occur -- delays between 12 and 18 months to process a medical license and severe constraints to the Department's ability to prosecute physicians who pose a risk to the health and safety of Illinois citizens.

Despite these calamitous consequences, ISMS actively lobbied against a bill to preserve the Department's Medical Unit; the proposed bill would have allocated the required \$9.6 million enabling the Medical Unit to maintain its 26 employees. Although the Department will now have significantly less resources, it will continue to prioritize and protect the welfare of the citizens of Illinois to the best of its ability.

Physicians' fees have remained the same since 1987. Since this time, the Department's required costs have approximately doubled. Due to these rising costs, the Department spends approximately \$1.8 million more in responsibly administering the mandated duties of the Medical Practice Act than it collects from the licensing fees paid by physicians.

As a direct result of ISMS' actions, the layoffs will occur. Please be further advised that the Department will have one employee to handle all physician licensing requests in Illinois. Licenses for new physicians and for physicians transferring to Illinois will take between 12 and 18 months to process. Graduating medical students seeking to match with hospitals in Illinois will experience the same delays. Currently licensed physicians will need to renew their licenses in 2014, and will experience delays of up to 18 months to renew their license. Physicians' current licenses will almost certainly expire before a renewal can be processed. It is unlawful for anyone to provide medical services without holding a valid medical license.

Physicians may wish to contact their employer, affiliated hospital(s), and insurance company to make the necessary preparations in advance of the lengthy licensing delays. Nurses, physicians' assistants, pharmacists, and other healthcare professional may wish to discuss this situation with any physicians with whom they affiliate, as it may affect their ability to provide services to these physicians.

Sincerely,

Manuel Flores
Acting Secretary

Jay Stewart
Director