

MEMORANDUM

BOARD OF
MEDICAL
EXAMINERS

Date : May 21, 1997

To : (1) Insurers Utilizing Independent Medical Evaluations; and
(2) Health Care Providers Conducting Independent Medical Evaluations

From : Oregon Board of Medical Examiners

The Oregon Board of Medical Examiners has noted an increase in complaints from individuals who have undergone Independent Medical Evaluation (IME)

The issues brought forth by patients are multiple: a poor understanding of the nature of an IME, a perceived insensitivity or lack of compassion for the claimants underlying medical problems, rudeness to the individuals under evaluation and, most frequently, complaints of significant discomfort during and following examination. Failure to provide adequate explanation and/or adequate draping has also led to allegations of sexual boundary violations, especially following physical assessment around the breasts and pelvis of female patients.

The Oregon Board of Medical Examiners understands that there is not a traditional physician/patient relationship in an Independent Medical Evaluation. At the same time, physicians who perform Independent Medical Evaluation are expected to adhere to the same standards of conduct, professionalism and diagnostic criteria. It is hoped that sensitivity to patients' health care concerns and privacy, as well as improved personal communication by the examining physicians prior to the IME, will reduce the above complaints. It is important to be informative and cautious when examining a patient in the breast or genital area as well.

The importance of independent assessment is appreciated by the Board of Medical Examiners, and we would be very happy to hear from any who work in disability resolution regarding the above Issues.

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Governor



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