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MARK BOWDEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Board continues to discuss chronic interventional pain management

DES MOINES, IA. -- The Iowa Board of Medicine continues to explore an effective way to address patient safety concerns in the diagnosis and treatment of pain-related disorders primarily with the application of high-risk interventional techniques in managing subacute, chronic, persistent, and intractable pain.

In April the Board posted on its Website a draft policy statement identifying chronic interventional pain management procedures and the appropriate medical expertise needed to assess and treat a patient's chronic pain. The draft statement was not presented as a completed work, but represented the Board's broad concerns about patient safety and why education, training and skill of the care provider are paramount in the performance and interpretation of chronic interventional pain management.

Consequently, no timetable was established for final action on the draft statement, nor was the Board committed to addressing the issue exclusively through a statement, which is not a legally binding opinion of the Board. In the ensuing weeks, the Board received significant written comment about the draft statement and allowed the public to speak on the topic at subsequent Board meetings.

At the Board's meeting on July 9, Chairman Siroos Shirazi, M.D., acknowledged the comments received about the draft statement and he clarified that the Board has no interest in restricting traditional anesthesiology practices by certified registered nurse anesthetists, who are referenced in the draft statement. He did, however, affirm that the Board would address patient safety in the high-risk chronic interventional pain management procedures that require the significant education and specialty training of physicians and osteopathic physicians.

At its September 2-3 meeting, the Board will continue its discussion of chronic interventional pain management, which may include consideration of proposed rules and/or revision to the draft policy statement.