



Fields of Opportunities

STATE OF IOWA

KIM REYNOLDS, GOVERNOR  
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IOWA BOARD OF MEDICINE  
MARK BOWDEN, M.P.A., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**IOWA BOARD OF MEDICINE**  
**(July 26, 2017)**

**PUBLIC DOCUMENTS: Please click on the person's name to access a link to a copy of the public documents for these physicians.**

Recently, the Iowa Board of Medicine took the following action:

**J. Patrick Bertroche, D.O.**, a 50-year-old Iowa-licensed physician who practices psychiatry in Des Moines, Iowa, entered into a combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement with the Board on July 20, 2017. The Board charged Dr. Bertroche with violating the laws and rules governing the practice of medicine when he maintained multiple pre-signed prescriptions which were intended to be completed and issued by staff at a later time at his office in Des Moines, Iowa. The pre-signed prescriptions were kept in a locked office which according to Dr. Bertroche was accessible only by his staff. Under the terms of the July 20, 2017, combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement, the Board issued Dr. Bertroche a Citation and Warning and ordered him to pay a \$5,000 civil penalty and complete a Board-approved professional ethics program.

**Robert D. Cunard, M.D.**, a 50-year-old Iowa-licensed physician who practices family medicine in Missouri Valley, Iowa, had a Statement of Charges filed against him by the Board on July 20, 2017. Dr. Cunard entered into a Stipulated Order: Agreement Not to Prescribe Controlled Substances with the Board on May 19, 2017. The Board alleged that Dr. Cunard failed to provide appropriate pain management to patients in Missouri Valley, Iowa, and Dr. Cunard agreed not to prescribe controlled substances with the exception of testosterone and patients in residential hospice and nursing home settings, until this matter is resolved. Under the terms of the July 20, 2017, Statement of Charges, the Board alleged that Dr. Cunard willfully or repeatedly violated the laws and rules governing the practice of medicine in Iowa when he failed to provide appropriate medical care and/or pain management to numerous patients in Missouri Valley, Iowa, between 2011 and 2017, resulting in serious harm to patients and the public, including overdose deaths. A hearing is scheduled on September 21-22, 2017.

**James O. Steele, M.D.**, a 66-year-old Iowa-licensed physician who formerly practiced family medicine in Ft. Dodge, Iowa, had the terms of an order terminated by the Board on July 20, 2017. On March 6, 2014, Dr. Steele entered into a combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement with the Board. The Board charged Dr. Steele with violating the laws and rules governing the practice of medicine in Iowa when he failed to provide appropriate pain management to multiple patients in Fort Dodge, Iowa, in 2009 and 2010. The Board issued Dr. Steele a Citation and Warning and ordered him to pay a \$5,000 civil penalty and complete a Board-approved professional ethics program. The Board also prohibited Dr. Steele from prescribing, administering or dispensing controlled substances for the treatment of chronic pain and placed him on probation for a period of five years subject to Board monitoring, including prescribing audits. Recently, Dr.

Steele submitted a request to terminate the terms of the March 6, 2014, combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement and demonstrated that he has fully complied with the terms of the order. The Board noted that Dr. Steele paid the \$5,000 civil penalty; successfully completed a Board-approved professional ethics program; and fully complied with the terms of his probation, including Board monitoring and prescribing audits. On July 20, 2017, the Board voted to terminate the terms of the March 6, 2014, combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement and Dr. Steele's Iowa medical license is returned to its full privileges, free and clear of all restrictions.

**Kurt R. Vander Ploeg, M.D.**, a 76-year-old Iowa-licensed physician who practices family medicine in Pella, Iowa, had the terms of an order terminated by the Board on July 20, 2017. On May 15, 2015, Dr. Vander Ploeg entered into a combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement with the Board. The Board charged Dr. Vander Ploeg with violating the laws and rules governing the practice of medicine in Iowa when he failed to provide appropriate pain management to multiple patients in Pella, Iowa, between 2007 and 2014. The Board issued Dr. Vander Ploeg a Citation and Warning and ordered him to pay a \$5,000 civil penalty and complete a medical record keeping course. The Board also prohibited Dr. Vander Ploeg from prescribing, administering or dispensing controlled substances for the treatment of chronic pain and placed him on probation for a period of five years subject to Board monitoring, including prescribing audits. Recently, Dr. Vander Ploeg submitted a request to terminate the terms of the May 15, 2015, combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement and demonstrated that he has fully complied with the terms of the order. The Board noted that Dr. Vander Ploeg paid the \$5,000 civil penalty; successfully completed a Board-approved record keeping course; and fully complied with the terms of his probation, including Board monitoring and prescribing audits. On July 20, 2017, the Board voted to terminate the terms of the May 15, 2015, combined Statement of Charges and Settlement Agreement and Dr. Vander Ploeg's Iowa medical license is returned to its full privileges, free and clear of all restrictions.

**When appropriate, disciplinary actions are reported to the National Practitioner Data Bank, an electronic repository administered by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration to track adverse license actions.**

**CONSUMER COMPLAINTS: Consumers can submit complaints against physicians by clicking [HERE](#), visiting the Board's Website at [www.medicalboard.iowa.gov](http://www.medicalboard.iowa.gov), calling (515) 281-5847, or mail to 400 SW 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite C, Des Moines, IA 50309.**