

Scams

Each year, the Iowa Board of Medicine is contacted by licensees who report that they have received suspicious letters, emails, and calls from individuals claiming to be from the Board. Across the country, state licensees fall prey to scams targeting licensees in an attempt to access personal and financial information. While the Board will continue to prioritize responding to these inquiries quickly, the following information can help each licensee protect their information and recognize these scams.

1. The Board rarely takes “immediate” action

Board investigations take time. The collection of information, preparation of investigative reports, and deliberation by the Board generally takes months. If you are the subject of an investigation, a Board investigator will usually reach out to you concerning the allegations against you before the Board deliberates on whether to impose disciplinary action. Additionally, you can always contact the Board to confirm whether you are under investigation. So, be suspicious of anything claiming that the Board has taken, or will immediately take, action against your license. Further, our staff is happy to confirm the status of your case with you during an investigation.

While the Board *is* empowered to take emergency action against a licensee who poses an immediate threat to the health or safety of Iowans, such circumstances are exceedingly rare. If the Board ever were to enter an emergency suspension of your license, such suspension would be issued in the form of a public order by the Board listing the allegations against you. You would further be entitled to a hearing before the Board as soon as practicable, and will receive further communication from the Board and the Attorney General’s Office. Even in instances of emergency action, chances are that an investigator or other Board staff will contact you *before* a public order is issued. So if an emergency order is the first communication you receive from the Board, you should be suspicious and call and confirm.

2. We will never threaten your licensure in exchange for immediate payment or information.

Be suspicious of any communication asking for immediate payment of a fee or bond. The Board of Medicine only collects money from licensees in two instances: During the licensure and renewal process and upon entry of a final order of the Board following a contested case proceeding or settlement wherein the Board has ordered you to pay a civil penalty. Neither of those circumstances will occur without prior communication with the Board.

3. Confirm that the provided contact information is accurate

All contact information for the Board can be found on the Board's website, here: <https://medicalboard.iowa.gov/>. Board staff email addresses end in "@iowa.gov," and emails from the Iowa Department of Public Health end in "@idph.iowa.gov." When responding to a communication from the Board, verify that the phone number and email address matches that on the Board's website.

If you can't find the relevant contact information, simply contact the Board's general number or email found on our website and staff will connect you.

- Phone: 515-281-5171
- Email: ibm@iowa.gov

4. Focus on Content over Appearance

Scammers are sophisticated. Whether it's a seemingly formal script read over the phone, a drafted order signed and sealed by a judge, or a letter drafted on the Board's letterhead, scammers will go to great lengths to present themselves as legitimate. Be on the lookout for odd formatting, use of strange phrases that seem translated, spelling and grammatical errors, and confusing language.

5. When in Doubt: Contact Us!

If ever you have a concern that a Board communication may not be legitimate, or you fear that you are being targeted by a scammer, reach out to us. Never hesitate to contact the Board directly with concerns about suspicious Board communications; helping us identify scams early could help protect other Iowa licensees against similar scams!