

Determining Whether a Physician is Competent to Practice Medicine is Complex

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This article originally ran in *MD Magazine* on September 11, 2017. [Click here](#) to read the article in its entirety.

Physicians are granted a license to practice medicine and it is presumed that they will remain competent to treat patients throughout their careers. In the past decade, reports of physician incompetence have been fueled by patients as well as regulators. Physicians must be “currently competent” to practice medicine, but what are the standards for determining who is fit?

Alma Saravia, Healthcare Attorney at Flaster Greenberg, authored an article for *MD Magazine* focused on the valid methods that a hospital or medical board may use to determine whether a physician is “currently competent” because he/she has the skills and knowledge to continue practicing medicine safely. If an assessment of the physician identifies deficiencies, then steps should be taken to remediate the physician so that he or she may return to practice.

Takeaways for physicians include:

- Documentation of the care rendered is key – electronic medical records must be tailored to the patient;
- Board re-certification demonstrates specialty specific medical knowledge;
- Keep up-to-date on changing standards of practice in your state, i.e. prescribing opiates;
- Continuing Medical Education courses should be completed at in-person sessions;
- Voluntarily enrolling in a Professional Assistance Program or counseling is a positive step; and
- Taking proactive steps to manage your practice and to be aware of factors which may affect clinical competence.

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ATTORNEYS MENTIONED

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