

**Texas Medical Board  
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**TMB Exceeds Legislative Target for Licenses**

The medical licenses issued by the Texas Medical Board in June took an average of 44 days to process.

“We have already exceeded the goal established by the Texas Legislature, which is an average of 51 days to issue licenses,” said Dr. Roberta Kalafut, TMB’s board president. “The legislature asked us what we needed to get the job done and they gave us what we asked for. It was enough.”

The reduced processing time is an abrupt reversal from as recently as September, when the current fiscal year began. During the first quarter of this fiscal year, the licenses issued took an average of 100 days to process. The difference is the addition of six new full-time employees, which were appropriated by the 80th Texas Legislature, and some streamlining in the application process.

The number of physician license applications increased sharply in FY 2006. In FY 2005, TMB received 2,992 applications. In FY 2006, that number jumped more than 25 percent, to 4,026. It increased again in FY 2007 to 4,041. TMB already has received more than 3,000 applications this fiscal year and expects to again exceed 4,000 applications.

Even as the number of applications increased, however, the number of licensure analysts TMB was authorized to employ remained at the same level as in 2003, when only 2,561 applications were submitted.

“We had the same number of licensure analysts in 2007 as we had in 2003, even though the number of applications we received had increased by 57 percent,” Kalafut said.

The legislature in 2007 appropriated six additional full-time employees to address the logjam in application processing. TMB began hiring the new employees at the beginning of the new fiscal year in September. As those employees were hired and trained, the processing time showed an immediate impact, quickly dropping from an average of 100 days during the first quarter of FY 2008, which began September 1, 2007.

“Texas is an attractive place for physicians to practice, as the number of applications we receive demonstrates,” Kalafut said. “But the sudden jump in the number of applications put a serious strain on a licensing system designed for a far fewer number. That problem has been addressed.”

In addition to the reduction in application processing time, TMB also has eliminated the licensing backlog. Only 33 applications were awaiting screening in June, and the oldest was only 14 days old. As recently as five months ago, there were 507 applications backlogged, with the average age of 90 days.