

Resource System for State Licensing Boards Scores "Hit"

Editorial Staff

Cin-bad (Chiropractic Information Network/Board Action Databank) was introduced to the chiropractic profession during the annual meeting of the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (see June 4, 1993 issue of "DC").

The original investment in Cin-bad was made by the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners and the ACA with matching development grants in 1989.

After being on-line with the chiropractic licensing boards for less than six weeks, the FCLB's new international data base of board actions has given a glimpse of what it can do.

Cin-bad was recently accessed by the South Carolina State Board of Chiropractic Examiners to check all their non-student applicants for licensure for the next licensing cycle. In the process, they identified one DC who had previous action taken against his license in Georgia. On his South Carolina application, the doctor had not truthfully answered a question asking about past or pending action by any other licensing boards against his license.

"You can't rely totally on what's on an application," said Alana Holmes, executive director of the South Carolina board. "A national data base is a critical tool, essential to the process of verifying applicant credentials."

The South Carolina board did not take action based solely on the information contained in the Cin-bad record, but rather used it to have enough identifying data to contact the Georgia State Board of Chiropractic Examiners under the Freedom of Information Act. The Georgia board sent the complete legal records of the DC in question, which were then carefully reviewed by the South Carolina board. The board members voted to deny the doctor's application for licensure based on both the previous offense and on the information provided in the South Carolina application.

"This is critical for licensing," Holmes continued. "But I can't stress strongly enough how important it is for the licensing board to submit their final disciplinary action to the databank for it to be worthwhile."

Holmes described the substantial savings to the state taxpayer in identifying doctors with previous board actions before they receive state licensure. "Going through the full disciplinary process against a doctor who is already licensed in our state can take quite a while, since the system is carefully designed to protect the constitutional rights of the doctor under review as well as the public." Screening applicants before they are licensed is clearly a better approach.

"We are surprised that Cin-bad had an impact so soon after going on-line," said FCLB President Carroll Winkler, DC. Dr. Winkler applauded the efforts of the South Carolina and the Georgia boards, and

commended the licensing boards who have already installed the modems and communication software of Cin-bad.

"The latest information we have says the Federation of State Medical Boards has seven states in their electronic access system, and we already have 11 after only six weeks, with more signing on daily," reported Dr. Winkler. He also indicated interest from four Canadian provinces in joining the system.

Dr. Winkler asserted that Cin-bad allows the FCLB to save taxpayer dollars while better protecting the public, and "ultimately to enhance the image of the many fine doctors who are practicing within the law."

System designer Peter Sawtell observed that changes in the computer industry have made the Cin-bad system possible. "Just two years ago, the computer hardware needed to run this system would have cost three times what it did this year. The data base software we needed was only released about a year ago. What would have been prohibitively expensive a short time ago is now a reasonable investment, even for a relatively small profession like chiropractic."

"With the sorts of low cost and high benefits that we see with Cin-bad, I will be very surprised if other health care professions don't come on-line with similar programs soon," Mr. Sawtell said.

Gregg Schuder, executive director of the Georgia State Board of Chiropractic Examiners, recognized the "early visionaries" like Kay Gunter, executive director of the Missouri Board of Chiropractic Examiners, for laying the foundations for such a system. Mr. Schuder has fully computerized the Georgia system. When he gets a "hit" on Cin-bad, he can generate appropriate letters of inquiry to the original reporting board. "We need to have this kind of spirit and cooperation about this system," he said. "You never know who's out there."

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