

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **Tennessee Board of Medical Examiners Patient Safety Guidelines**

**A. Given that:**

1. Medical errors and patient safety are a national concern to all involved in health care delivery.
2. The Health Related Boards are legally and ethically obligated to hold individuals accountable for their competency and behaviors that impact patient/client/resident care.
3. A punitive environment does not fully take into effect systems issues, and a blame-free environment does not hold practitioners appropriately accountable.

**B. We resolve that the Health Related Boards will:**

1. Strive for a culture that balances the need for a non-punitive learning environment with the equally important need to hold persons accountable for their actions.
2. Judge based on behavior, not the outcome.
3. Distinguish between human error, at-risk behavior, and intentional reckless behavior.
4. Foster a learning environment that encourages the identification and review of all error, near-misses, adverse events, and system weaknesses.
5. Support the prevention of future errors by promoting the use of a wide range of responses to safety-related events including coaching, non-disciplinary counseling, additional education or training, demonstration of competency, additional supervision and oversight and disciplinary action when appropriate to address performance issues.
6. Work to share information across organization to promote continuous improvement and ensure the highest level of patient/client/resident/staff safety.
  - (a) Collaborate in efforts to establish a statewide culture of learning, justice and accountability to provide the safest possible environment of patients/clients/residents.

7. In reviewing complaints filed with the Boards, the consultants and staff will consider the following blameworthy activity that may result in board action:
- (a) An event or medical error that is a result of a practitioner's actions while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - (b) The practitioner responsible for the error has blatantly disregarded the facility's policies and procedures or professional standards of practice.
  - (c) The practitioner is being purposefully or recklessly unsafe.
  - (d) The practitioner commits an intentional and/or criminal act (including abuse, neglect or misappropriation of patient/resident property).

**This policy was adopted by the Board of Medical Examiners at their November 6, 2006 board meeting.**