



POLICY & ACTION FROM CONSUMER REPORTS

December 29, 2011

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown
Governor, State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, California 95814

Regarding: Request for executive action to require that the Medical Board of California provide teleconference participation in its public meetings

Dear Governor Brown:

Consumers Union's Safe Patient Project (SPP), a nationwide campaign, is organizing patient safety advocates from across the state of California. SPP has been working in California on issues relating to hospital safety (hospital-acquired infections and medical errors) since 2003, recently coalescing as the California Safe Patient Network. Members of the California Network monitor agency meetings, testify at legislative hearings and participate as members of various health-related state committees. CU's Safe Patient Project works to ensure that consumers have information about patient safety as a method of stimulating provider improvement. We are concerned about poor consumer access to Medical Board of California (MBC) meetings and request that you take executive action to require that the MBC make all of its public meetings available for interactive public participation through teleconferencing.

As you well know, California is a large state, making MBC public meetings inaccessible for consumers who cannot afford the funds and time to travel the length of California to a meeting. Many of the consumer activists we work with are survivors of medical harm and some are disabled as a result. For these well-informed and passionate activists, travel to MBC meetings is even more difficult and, in some cases, not possible. We hope that you will keep this in mind as you consider taking executive action to require that the MBC, responsible for so many decisions that affect the lives of California patients, make its meetings easily accessible through teleconferencing.

Recently the MBC began webcasting a portion of their quarterly board meetings. While this is a step in the right direction, webcasting does not allow for consumer participation in meetings, only for their observation. Currently, the public is only able to participate in the meetings if they are physically present. Creating an interactive teleconference capacity for all of the board's meetings would allow the public to provide input into their work.

A member of the California Network previously approached the MBC to request that their meetings be made available for public participation through teleconferencing, but did so without success.

Senator Liu authored a bill this year, SB 103, related to the issue of teleconferencing board meetings but, unfortunately, the bill has been held in Assembly Appropriations. Senator Liu recently sent you a letter requesting that you issue an Executive Order to create interactive opportunities for all state board and commission meetings. We support this overall effort to open up government in our geographically expansive state.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you soon in response to this request for action on your part to increase the opportunities for consumer participation in MBC public meetings through teleconferencing. Please contact Maryann O'Sullivan, who is working for Consumers Union on California Medical Board issues, at maryannosullivan1@gmail.com, [415 457 1417](tel:4154571417) (office) or [510 757 7942](tel:5107577942) (cell) to. Our contact information is below.

Sincerely,



Lisa McGiffert
Director
Consumers Union Safe Patient Project
www.SafePatientProject.org
lmcgiffert@consumer.org
512-477-4431 ext 115



Betsy Imholz
Special Projects Director
Consumers Union of United States, Inc.
West Coast Office
1535 Mission Street
San Francisco, California 94103-2512
(415) 431-6747 ext. 125
Imhobe@consumer.org