

## Joint statement from FSMB on dissemination of misinformation

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), which supports its member state medical licensing boards, has recently issued a statement saying that providing misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine contradicts physicians' ethical and professional responsibilities, and therefore may subject a physician to disciplinary actions, including suspension or revocation of their medical license. We at the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), and the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) support FSMB's position. We also want all physicians certified by our boards to know that such unethical or unprofessional conduct may prompt their respective board to take action that could put their certification at risk.

Expertise matters, and board-certified physicians have demonstrated that they have stayed current in their field. Spreading misinformation or falsehoods to the public during a time of a public health emergency goes against everything our boards and our community of board certified physicians stand for. The evidence that we have safe, effective and widely available vaccines against COVID-19 is overwhelming. We are particularly concerned about physicians who use their authority to denigrate vaccination at a time when vaccines continue to demonstrate excellent effectiveness against severe illness, hospitalization and death.

We all look to board-certified physicians to provide outstanding care and guidance; providing misinformation about a lethal disease is unethical, unprofessional and dangerous. In times of medical emergency, the community of expert physicians committed to science and evidence collectively shares a responsibility for giving the public the most accurate and timely health information available, so they can make decisions that work best for themselves and their families. ❖

Warren Newton, MD, MPH  
President and CEO  
American Board of Family Medicine

Richard J. Baron, MD  
President and CEO  
American Board of Internal Medicine

David G. Nichols, MD, MBA  
President and CEO  
American Board of Pediatrics