

## Arizona Board of Osteopathic Examiners in Medicine and Surgery (Board)

Board timely issued initial and renewal licenses, but did not timely resolve complaints, consistently suspend licenses for violations involving imminent public health, safety, or welfare concerns, or verify some applicants met all initial license and permit requirements, potentially affecting patient safety

### Audit purpose

To assess whether the Board issued and renewed licenses, permits, and registrations in accordance with statute and rule requirements, investigated and resolved complaints within its jurisdiction in a timely manner and imposed disciplinary action consistent with the nature and severity of violations, provided information to the public as required by statute, and complied with State conflict-of-interest requirements, and to provide responses to the statutory sunset factors.

### Key findings

The Board:

- Is responsible for regulating osteopathic medical professionals including issuing and renewing licenses, permits, and registrations; investigating and resolving complaints; and providing information to the public about licensees.
- Reviewed and approved or denied initial and renewal applications within required time frame and complied with conflict-of-interest requirements we reviewed.
- Did not resolve 60 percent of complaints it closed in fiscal year 2023 within 180 days, and 72 percent of open complaints had been open for more than 180 days as of June 2023. Untimely complaint resolution may impact patient safety when licensees alleged to have violated Board statutes and rules continue to practice while under investigation even though they may be unfit to do so. The Board's failure to use its statutory authority to issue subpoenas and timely obtain consultants to review complaints contributed to untimely complaint resolution.
- Did not consistently use its authority to suspend licenses until complaints were resolved for violations involving imminent public health, safety, or welfare concerns.
- Did not verify that 3 license/permit applicants we reviewed had not engaged in unprofessional conduct.

### Key recommendations

The Board should:

- Investigate and resolve complaints within 180 days.
- Use its statutory authority to issue subpoenas and develop a list of outside medical consultants with varying specialties to more timely resolve complaints.
- Consistently use its statutory authority to temporarily suspend licenses when necessary to protect the public.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for verifying that permit applicants have not engaged in unprofessional conduct.