

ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY

*Newsletter to Promote Pharmacy
and Drug Law Compliance.*

2024 in Review

The year 2024 was busy for the Alabama State Board of Pharmacy.

The Board welcomed Johnny Brooklere as a new Board member after he won the popular vote for one of the two undesignated Board member positions. We also said farewell to Rob Colburn. Mr Colburn served his five-year term, with his final year as president. Mr Colburn served with professionalism, dedication, and a drive to care for the citizens of Alabama.

Mrs Rhonda Coker retired from the Board, effective December 31, 2024, after 18 years of service. Mrs Coker served in numerous capacities over her tenure, most recently as licensing supervisor. Mrs Coker was an incredible leader and manager for the Board. She will be greatly missed.

Dr Rebecca Tindle assumed the position of licensing supervisor, effective January 1, 2025.

Dr Tindle had previously managed

pharmacist and intern/extern licensing. Dr Tindle will continue in that role, in addition to the new supervisory role.

The Board made numerous rule changes during 2024. Three significant changes will be discussed below. Each rule change is listed individually on the Board's [website](#) for viewing (Statutes & Rules > Rule Changes | 2024).

One of the most exciting developments was changes to Rule 680-X-2-.44 Collaborative Practice becoming effective on January 14, 2024, in collaboration with the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners. This change allows pharmacists to collaborate with physicians to test/screen **and** treat acute, uncomplicated illnesses or injuries. The Board further amended this rule to clarify the appropriate physician-to-pharmacist ratio for this collaboration.

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2024 in Review

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Before this rule amendment, a pharmacist was only authorized to test and treat a patient who had a physician-patient relationship with the physician with whom the pharmacist had a collaborative practice agreement (CPA). The January 2024 change authorizes a pharmacist to test and treat any patient, regardless of their physician-patient relationship, according to the CPA protocol. The test-to-treat protocol is available on the Board's [website](#) (Pharmacist > Collaborative Practice). The Board welcomes this expansion of the pharmacist's role in treating the patients of Alabama and looks forward to seeing an increase in access to health care for many Alabamians.

The Board also amended 680-X-2-.27 Private Consultation Areas For Pharmacies. This rule originally required **any** pharmacy to have a private consultation area with specific dimensions for patient counseling. However, in June 2024, the Board introduced a rule change that would eliminate this requirement for closed-door pharmacies (pharmacies that are not open to the public). The change became effective on November 14, 2024.

The Board issued one policy statement in 2024. All policy statements are available on the Board's [website](#) (Resources > Policy Statements). Before Policy 24-001, Pharmacist

Licensure by Reciprocity, the Board required a reciprocity candidate to maintain their home state license in order to have an Alabama pharmacist license. Policy 24-001 stipulates that once a pharmacist has obtained licensure in Alabama via reciprocity, maintaining licensure in any other state is not required. This policy also allows a pharmacist to reciprocate regardless of whether their home state license is active. As long as one state is active, a pharmacist may apply for reciprocity to Alabama.

In October 2024, the Board transitioned to a new software system. This system requires any person or entity regulated by the Board to create a Licensure Gateway profile. Pharmacists, pharmacies, and entities utilized the new system for renewals for 2025. The transition was relatively seamless, and we appreciated everyone's patience as we worked through it.

Technicians and interns/externs will renew at the beginning of October 2025. The Board encourages technicians and interns/externs to create their Gateways now to ensure a seamless renewal. Videos and written instructions on how to create a Gateway are available on our [home page](#).

With the new database, random technician continuing education (CE) audits will be conducted.

Technicians being audited will need to upload proof of completion of the CE requirements to their Gateways.

Technicians are required to have completed the following CE by December 31, 2025:

- Initial licensure prior to January 1, 2024 – six total CE hours (two hours must be live).
- Initial licensure between January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024 – three total CE hours (one hour must be live).
- Initial licensure after January 1, 2025 – no CE required for this renewal period.

Attendees of Board meetings, in person or virtually, may receive live CE credit. Board meeting attendance is a free and easy way to contribute to CE compliance and stay up to date with Board activities and issues.

Please visit the Board's website for information on how to submit hours for credit.

Each meeting is worth one live hour.

- Pharmacists can receive a maximum of three live hours per year for attending a Board meeting.
- Technicians can receive a maximum of one live hour per year for attending a Board meeting.



2024 in Review

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Reminders:

- Technicians are required to complete a Board-approved training program within six months of their initial registration with the Board. Documentation of completion of the training must be uploaded to the technician's Gateway within 10 days. Supervising pharmacists are responsible for ensuring that technicians comply with this Board rule.
- Technicians, interns/externs, and pharmacists are responsible for updating their place of employment within 10 days of any employment change. Updates to employment and other personal information should be made through the individual's Gateway.

Alabama Doctors Warn Public of 'Gas Station' Drugs at Birmingham Substance Abuse Conference

Excerpted from the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners & Medical Licensure Commission with permission.

Emerging Threat of 'Gas Station' Drugs

Known as "gas station weed," products like Delta-8 are marketed as natural remedies but carry serious health risks. *[They are found in colorful packaging and are sometimes on the checkout counter near gum or candy.]*

Delta-8 is a psychoactive compound derived from hemp and often marketed as a legal alternative to marijuana. It may be addictive and is growing in popularity, especially among young users, some of whom

report severe side effects such as anxiety, psychosis, and even violent behavior.

[The products are often marketed as supplements, mood boosters, or energy boosters. Some have effects similar to opioids, leading to concerns that people might experience impaired breathing or become cognitively impaired or sedated to the point that they have an accident.]

"Just because a substance is available over the counter doesn't mean it's safe," warns Dr Luke Engeriser, Deputy Chief Medical Officer at AltaPointe Health Systems in Mobile. Engeriser, who will deliver a presentation at this weekend's conference titled "Gas Station Pharmacology," said, "We

need to educate physicians and the public on the dangers and unpredictable effects of these substances. They're not regulated or approved for consumption, and the potential health consequences can be serious."

UAB Study

A study by researchers at UAB [University of Alabama at Birmingham] published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry* detailed cases where people who vaped or ate Delta-8 became psychotic and violent. Two of the authors of the study – psychiatrists Dr Badari Birur and Dr Chelsea Miller – said **in one month they saw a dozen patients at UAB** for complaints related to Delta-8.

Alabama Doctors Warn Public of 'Gas Station' Drugs at Birmingham Substance Abuse Conference

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Dr Max Rogers, Chairman of the Board of Medical Examiners, also cautioned that because Delta-8 is unregulated, buyers don't truly know what they're getting.

"Buying Delta-8 is a huge gamble," according to Dr Rogers. "Despite what it may say on its packaging, there's no way to really know what's in these products. But we know for certain it can pose serious health risks, so it's crucial people understand the dangers."

[Last year, Alabama set the minimum age to buy Delta-8 at 21 and required manufacturers to make its packaging less appealing to kids. At least two cities in east Alabama have banned the sales of these unregulated substances.]

Where to Get Help

For substance abuse treatment resources in Alabama, visit druguse.alabama.gov.

Note: The Alabama Board of Medical Examiners and Medical Licensure Commission are focusing on ways our licensees can educate their patients and the public about the dangers of potentially addictive and unregulated substances like Delta-8, commonly sold in gas stations, vape shops, and convenience stores.

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