As of March 2014, the Board regulated 760 licensed naturopathic physicians, the majority of whom also had a certificate to dispense natural substances, drugs, and devices, and had 14 medical assistant and 315 physician training certificate holders.

**Board should strengthen its licensing policies and procedures**—The Board’s procedures did not ensure that all applicants met licensing/certification requirements. For example, we found an instance where a license application was not placed on a board meeting agenda for the Board’s required review and approval. Our review of a sample of six licensure-by-endorsement applications disclosed that one applicant had not met the 3 years of active practice statutory requirement and that for three applicants, the Board did not obtain sufficient documentation to ensure that these applicants met all license requirements. In addition, we reviewed the application files of three preceptorship conduct certificate holders, and the files lacked documentation that the applicants met the certificate requirements.

**Board should continue conducting medical education audits of paper renewals**—Each licensed naturopathic physician must complete continuing medical education hours and report compliance on his/her license renewal application. A physician may apply for renewal either online or by paper. The Board is required to audit 10 percent of the renewal applications for continuing education compliance. However, the Board had only been auditing the license renewal applications submitted online and not the paper renewal applications. Once we informed the Board of this oversight, the Board began auditing paper license renewals for calendar year 2014.

**Board should develop an electronic tracking mechanism**—The Board has established time frames for issuing licenses and certificates, as required by law, but the Board does not track its compliance with the time frames. Although the Board processed 56 of the 60 license and certificate applications we reviewed within the overall required time frames, an electronic tracking system would help the Board know whether it is meeting time frames, whether it should address problems that would lead to untimely issuance, and whether it should refund license fees for untimely issued licenses or certificates.

**Recommendations**

The Board should further strengthen or develop and implement policies and procedures to:

- Ensure that all license applications are placed on the board agenda for approval;
- Ensure that applicants for licensure-by-endorsement and applicants for certificates to conduct preceptorship training programs meet all requirements;
- Continue to ensure that it audits 10 percent of all license renewal applications; and
- Track compliance with licensing and certificate time frames. The Board should also develop and implement an electronic tracking mechanism for doing so.
Board should improve its provision of public information

During the audit, we placed phone calls to the Board to test how well the Board provides license and complaint information to the public. We asked whether a physician had a complaint or had been disciplined and whether physicians were licensed, and assessed how long the Board took to return messages. In response to these calls, we received some inaccurate complaint information, and inconsistent licensing information. We also had to wait 7 days for the Board to return one of the calls.

Recommendation

The Board should develop and implement policies and procedures for ensuring that it provides accurate and consistent information over the phone and that it quickly returns phone calls.