

Arizona State Board of Nursing

Board generally issued licenses/certificates we reviewed in accordance with statute and rule but did not resolve some complaints in a timely manner, which may affect patient safety; remit all required revenues to the State General Fund; and provide sufficient public information

Audit purpose

To determine whether the Board issued and renewed licenses/certificates in accordance with statute and rule requirements, resolved complaints in a timely manner and in accordance with Board policy, and provided information to the public as required by statute, and to provide responses to the statutory sunset factors.

Key findings

The Board:

- Was established in 1921 to regulate nursing practices in Arizona, including investigating and adjudicating complaints against licensees and certificate holders.
- Did not resolve 12 of 25 complaints we reviewed within 180 days—taking between 186 and 435 days to investigate and adjudicate these complaints. Untimely complaint resolution may negatively affect patient safety when delays allow licensees and certificate holders to continue to practice while under investigation even though they may be unfit to do so.
- Attributed untimely complaint resolution to high investigative caseloads. The Board requested and received an additional 3.5 FTE investigative positions for fiscal year 2022, which it expects will help lower its caseloads.
- Issued all 75 initial and renewal licenses/certificates we reviewed in a timely manner and ensured 73 applicants met applicable requirements. The Board did not ensure that 2 initial applicants provided all documentation required to verify lawful presence prior to licensure but later obtained this documentation.
- Has not remitted all required revenues to the State General Fund, including 100 percent of civil and administrative penalties.
- Did not consistently comply with open meeting law requirements we reviewed and did not provide sufficient public information in response to anonymous phone calls we made.

Key recommendations

The Board should:

- Investigate and adjudicate complaints within 180 days and determine if it needs additional resources to do so.
- Determine the correct amount that should be remitted to the State General Fund as soon as possible and ensure it remits 100 percent of future civil and administrative penalties to the State General Fund.
- Continue to implement its new open meeting law policies and procedures and its new and revised public information policies and procedures.