

## State of Arizona Naturopathic Physicians Medical Board

**Board issued licenses/certificates we reviewed to qualified applicants within required time frames but did not resolve some complaints in a timely manner, which may impact patient safety, and did not provide sufficient public information**

### Audit purpose

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

### Key findings

The Board:

- Was established in 1935 to regulate the practice of naturopathic medicine in Arizona.
- Ensured that all 27 initial naturopathic physician licenses and 22 certificates to dispense natural substances, drugs, and devices we reviewed generally met statute and rule requirements and were issued within required time frames.
- Did not resolve 11 of 27 complaints we reviewed within 180 days—taking between 182 and 476 days to resolve 10 of these complaints, with 1 complaint open for more than 500 days and still pending as of February 2022.
- Did not respond to 2 of 3 anonymous phone calls we made and had not removed some disciplinary actions older than 5 years from its website, as required by statute, but did so during the audit.
- Did not perform statutorily required inspections of naturopathic physicians' dispensing and prescribing practices, training programs, and continuing education programs.
- Complied with the open meeting law requirements we reviewed for the 4 monthly meetings the Board held between May and August 2021.
- Requires naturopathic medical students to obtain a certificate and pay a fee for engaging in the clinical training part of their education, unlike other Arizona health regulatory boards and naturopathic regulatory boards in other states.

### Key recommendations

The Board should:

- Investigate and resolve complaints within 180 days by developing and implementing time frames for completing all key steps in its complaint-handling process and monitoring its performance against these time frames.
- Comply with its policies and procedures for returning voicemail messages requesting information on licensees and certificate holders within 24 hours.
- Perform statutorily required inspections or work with the Legislature to modify statute related to these statutory requirements.
- Consistent with its reported plans, work with the Legislature to pursue a statutory change to eliminate medical students' clinical training certification requirement.