



State Medical Boards and the Politics of Public Protection

Dr. Carl F. Ameringer PhD

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State medical boards are the public's first line of defense against bad medical care. By licensing and disciplining physicians, the boards help maintain high standards in the medical profession. But how well have the boards succeeded in fulfilling their mission, especially in an era of managed care and its attendant impact on medical accountability?

This book offers the first comprehensive political account of state medical boards. Drawing on board records and files, interviews with prominent physicians, and his own experience as former assistant attorney general in charge of administrative prosecutions, Carl F. Ameringer reconstructs the political maelstrom surrounding physician discipline before and after the advent of managed care. He shows how the widening scope of conflict in the health-care field and improvements in case management and reporting techniques led to a substantial increase in the number of disciplinary actions in the 1980s and 1990s. And he describes the battles fought between state boards and their founding professional associations over efforts to prosecute physicians for drug abuse, sexual misconduct, and poor technical performance.

At a time of growing public awareness of both declining professional authority and the growth of government and corporate bureaucracy in the health-care industry, the conclusions of State Medical Boards and the Politics of Public Protection are especially timely. The book will be of interest to political scientists, physicians, and health-care consumers alike.

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