

Texas Medical Board Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2012

Media contact: Leigh Hopper, 512-305-7018

Customer service: 512-305-7030 or 800-248-4062

Drug shortage information

Recently, a Texas physician related a situation in which doctors had to resort to the use of expired emergency resuscitation drugs. Would the Texas Medical Board consider the use of expired drugs a violation of the standard of care?

The short answer is, if TMB investigates a complaint involving expired drugs, it will consider the drug shortage as well as storage conditions in making a determination.

Texas physicians across all specialties are coping with widespread drug shortages. A shortage of an important leukemia drug is making headlines now. Manufacturing delays, scarcity of raw materials, increased demand contribute to the problem. According to the National Cancer Institute, the trend is expected to worsen.

Most of what is known about drug expiration dates comes from a study conducted by the Food and Drug Administration at the request of the military. With a large and expensive stockpile of drugs, the military faced tossing out and replacing its drugs every few years. What they found from the study is many of the drugs, both prescription and over-the-counter, were good to use years after the expiration date. But the key was proper storage.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration maintains an extensive website devoted to the issue. For more information, visit <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/DrugShortages/default.htm>. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists also has a useful list: <http://www.ashp.org/DrugShortages/Current/>