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# CCLHO

## California Conference of Local Health Officers

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Eileen Eastman, Executive Administrator

March xx, 1997

Dear Health Officer:

The Medical Board of California (MBC) instituted a new program in 1994 called "Citation and Fine," whereby they are able to cite and fine physicians who, basically, commit minor infractions of the Medical Practice Act. This program has been recently expanded to include the failure to report communicable diseases and other reportable conditions by physicians in practice. The new regulations, which include failure to report pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 2500, became effective on December 24, 1996.

As you are aware from your experience in this area, not all required diseases are reported by all physicians. Some do not seem to be aware that it is their responsibility while others simply feel they do not have the time. We all know of instances where failure to report has resulted in outbreaks of disease or other problems for the community.

For the purposes of developing a uniform approach to the Citation and Fine Program, Guidelines have been developed by CCLHO to assist local Health Officers in understanding and implementing the Program. We have worked with the MBC and with the California Medical Association in their preparation. These Guidelines include definitions, a "decision tree," a proposed report form and a series of letters which may be adapted for use by local health departments. They also include relevant copies of laws and regulations pertinent to the Citation and Fine Program and to reporting diseases and a listing of the reportable diseases and conditions that may be sent with the letter to physicians.

This new program provides a real opportunity for local Health Officers to educate the physicians in their communities about the importance and value of reporting, particularly when faced with such serious and eminently communicable diseases such as *E. coli 0157:H7* and multiple-drug-resistant (MDR) tuberculosis. These new regulations should be used judiciously to improve the level of communicable disease reporting by physicians. The first steps should focus on educating physicians and developing cooperative relationships between them and local health departments. "Citation and Fine" should not be used as the first course of action against a noncompliant physician but should be used only after reasonable efforts at obtaining compliance have been made.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about these suggested guidelines, please contact Eileen M. Eastman, Executive Secretary, CCLHO at (916) 654-0023.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Prendergast, Jr., M.D., M.P.H.  
President

Enclosure

