

Medical boards get pushback as they try to punish doctors for Covid misinformation | POLITICO

By Darius Tahir

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“When that white coat is weaponized to spread misinformation, it does public harm,” Brian Castrucci, the CEO of the public health non-profit the de Beaumont Foundation in Bethesda, Md., who supports the action taken by health regulators.

The federation expects its members will conduct more investigations that would lead to disciplinary actions. But in some cases the responses from some medical boards and state officials have been stymied by political backlash. States like Tennessee and North Dakota, for example, have restricted state medical boards’ powers. And now legislators in 10 other states — including Florida and South Carolina — have introduced similar measures.

Some state boards also lack the legal tools to discipline doctors for sharing unreliable information via social media. They believe the precedents in their states for unprofessional or unethical behavior more narrowly apply to actions or speech made directly to patients under their care.

“We need the medical boards to stand up and evolve,” said Castrucci, who cited the need to preserve the public’s trust in medicine. “With the click of a mouse button, two million people can get information that’s incorrect.”

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