

PROPOSED POSITION STATEMENT:

Child Maltreatment

It is the position of the North Carolina Medical Board that child maltreatment (abuse and neglect) presents a significant risk to the health and well-being of North Carolinians. The Board's licensees have a legal responsibility to report as soon as practicable "cases involving recurrent illness or serious physical injury to any child under the age of 18 years where the illness or injury appears, in the physician's professional judgment, to be the result of non-accidental trauma." N.C. Gen. Stat. § 90-21.20(c1).^{*} It should also be noted that the statute provides civil and criminal immunity for reports made in good faith by physicians and other related personnel or institutions.

This legal and ethical obligation to report requires a licensee to recognize the signs, symptoms, and etiology of child maltreatment. Licensees are also encouraged to learn how to refer children for expert medical evaluations of possible maltreatment.

The following links provide detailed information on the state's reporting requirements and web-based training on recognition of child maltreatment:

https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/full_text_books/2016-11-01%202006087%20Abuse_Mason%20TEXT%20with%20supplement_0.pdf

<http://www.preventchildabusenc.org/services/trainings-and-professional-development/rrcourse>

^{*}This obligation specific to physicians is in addition to the legal requirement that any person or institution in North Carolina "who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent, as defined by N.C.G.S. § 7B-101, or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found." N.C.G.S. § 7B-301(a). This statute also provides criminal penalties for "knowingly or wantonly failing to make a report, or preventing someone else from making a report" when required by law.