

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN MEDICINE

EDUCATIONAL BULLETIN

(Approved June 13, 2001)

CHELATION THERAPY

Chelation therapy can be an effective treatment for heavy metal poisoning, hypercalcemia and digitalis toxicity. However, the Massachusetts Board of Registration (“the Board”) is concerned by recent attempts to promote chelation therapy for a variety of other, serious conditions, ranging from heart disease to cancer, for which the treatment has no proven efficacy. The Board is particularly concerned by the possibility that patients are being advised to pursue chelation therapy for these conditions to the exclusion of proven, effective treatments.

The Board concurs with the American Medical Association (AMA) positions set forth in its H/175.994 and H/175.997¹ that chelation therapy for conditions not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) is considered experimental. The FDA has not approved chelation therapy for such indications as cardiovascular disease, atherosclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, and cancer. There is no generally accepted scientific documentation that the use of chelation therapy is effective in the treatment of such medical indicators.

By taking this action, the Board joins with the following national professional organizations which have endorsed the AMA’s position on chelation therapy: the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Cardiology, the American College of Physicians, the American Heart Association, and the American Osteopathic Association. Among federal agencies, the same view has been expressed the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health, the United States Health Care Finance Administration, and the United States Public Health Service.

As set forth in Title 21, code of Federal Regulations, Section 312, a licensed physician can use chelation therapy for an unapproved use in investigational or research work. FDA clearance is required for such work. At the present time, the Board believes that chelation therapy for atherosclerosis is an experimental process without proven efficacy.

¹ See attached AMA policies H.175.994 and H.175.997.