

**Sunset Commission Testimony: Texas Medical Board
December 9, 2016**

Dave Claunch

Good morning. My name is Dave Claunch. I'm a small business owner here in Austin and the former mayor of the City of West Lake Hills here in Travis County. My wife has suffered from Lyme disease for the past eight years.

Soon after the first symptoms appeared, we visited about a dozen different specialists all across Texas. None of them could tell us what was wrong, but they all told us that it definitely wasn't Lyme disease because there is no Lyme disease in Texas! Boy, were they wrong.

After 10 months we finally convinced one of those specialists to order a Lyme test and it came back positive. If only all those other specialists had recognized Lyme sooner, my wife would be much better off today. Sadly, our experience is all too common.

Too many Texas doctors remain blissfully ignorant about Lyme disease. They fail to recognize even the obvious signs like the tell-tale "bulls-eye" rash. They refuse to order Lyme tests or they misinterpret the test results. It's tragic because the longer you wait to treat Lyme, the harder it is to cure.

According to its website, the mission of the Texas Medical Board is to "protect and enhance the public's health, safety and welfare by establishing and maintaining standards of excellence used in regulating the practice of medicine and ensuring quality health care for the citizens of Texas through licensure, discipline and education."

It's that last word – education – that I ask you to focus on. When you ask the TMB what that part of their mission statement means, they will emphatically tell you that it means only that they should educate Texas doctors about the TMB's licensing requirements. They insist that educating Texas doctors is not their job.

The Texas Board of Nursing embraces its educational mission. The word "education" appears 19 times on the Board of Nursing home page and there's an entire section that promotes CME opportunities for Texas nurses. But the TMB's homepage includes the word "education" just once – in its mission statement at the bottom of the page. There's no Education section and their publications rarely promote CME courses of any kind to their licensees.

So... given the TMB's refusal to promote education, I'm here today to ask you to please remind the Texas Medical Board that education truly is an essential part of its mission.

Remind them that they should actively promote CME opportunities to Texas medical practitioners like the Board of Nursing does. Not just about Lyme disease, but also about Zika, and Ebola, and West Nile, and heart disease, and diabetes, and cancer – all of the serious health issues that Texas doctors need to know about so they can recognize them early, when there's a better chance of a more complete recovery.

It's an easy fix and it has a minimal fiscal impact. They just need to be reminded that they do indeed play a critical role in helping to educate Texas doctors.

Thank you for your time – and for your service to Texas.

– Dave Claunch