DO NOT LET THE SUN SET ON YOU (BAD DOCTOR ET AL) IN TEXAS

In a recent edition of “DOC talk” there was a insightful inter-
view with Dr D Patrick MD, JD Executive Director of the Texas
Medical Board. The queries by the editor were very topical and
to the point. However, I am troubled by some of his (Dr P’s)
quoted responses. In this time of great population growth in
our state and with a shortage of physicians to provide patient
care, we could use a more doctor responsive Texas Medical
Board. We Texas physicians can easily find ourselves in the
‘bad Doc’ sights of the TMB court of justice with any com-
plaint or frivolous lawsuit. It appears that ‘good’ doctors can
make mistakes too and so he states, “we are going to do some-
thing (?) about it”. Since all alleged offensive reports reach Dr
Patrick’s TMB desk, his scrutiny of the practice of medicine in
Texas may be a bit tainted. He relates that doctors in his view
are potentially bad and greedy which has fomented since he
began his medical practice. His job number one per the TMB
website: PROTECT THE PUBLIC. A most creditable motto for
the Texas Rangers but not to reassuring for the majority of hard
working (good) Texas Docs. I suggest we need two medical
boards: one to process (expedite!) applications for medical li-
cense for a reasonable fee and the new “Med Bureau of Special
Investigation” to legal down the “bad doc” and/or suspend
their license to practice. Please no-
tice, now some insurance companies
offer TMB protection polices (more
overhead costs) because every issue
before TMB requires an attorney (no-
tice all the new attorney adds) to fa-
cilitate resolving almost any prob-
lem. This also mandates trips, in per-
son, to Austin; lost office time, loss
of income and attorney fees. In addi-
tion, not to mention the loss of a
needed healthcare provider on the
Texas-Mexico border while in the
Texas capital defending his/her name
and reputation. The new doctors that
desire to practice in our state because
of a more favorable malpractice cli-
mate along with the present docs who
do not retire early nor move out will
still have to stay ahead of Dr Patrick and the Texas “Ranger’
Med Board. ... Stand by to be fingerprinted and subsequently
there will be DNA swabs in the name of Protect the Public. The
reason that we have malpractice reform is that majority of the
people in this state voted (2003) in favor of the “Good Docs”
with optimism of accessible healthcare. The greater law enforce-
ment powers to the TMB were a legislative deal, just like the
overpriced medical license fee tax! Per the final question in the
article, unhappily, I do see eye to eye with him, Texas doctors
perceive him as a foe. Now, we understand why.