STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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November 17, 2005

Dear Board/Commission Member:

I recently directed the 23 health professions for which the Secretary of Health is the disciplining authority to adopt clear and consistent rules regarding sexual misconduct. The Uniform Disciplinary Act defines sexual contact with a patient as unprofessional conduct, and sexual misconduct by a health care professional represents a serious breach of the public trust. I am writing to thank those boards and commissions who have adopted rules regarding sexual misconduct, and to urge those boards and commissions who have not yet adopted such rules to do so.

The Office of Health Professions Quality Assurance filed documents on November 2 with the Code Reviser to start the rule-making process for the 23 Secretary professions. We expect to have rules adopted within a year

Several boards and commissions have adopted or are in the process of adopting sexual misconduct rules. They are the Chiropractic Quality Assurance Commission; Medical Quality Assurance Commission; Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission; Occupational Therapy Board; Optometry Board; and the Examining Board of Psychology. Thank you for your efforts to protect the public and clarify the duties of practitioners by adopting those rules.

I urge the remaining boards and commissions to adopt sexual misconduct rules. Adopting the rules will demonstrate a commitment to protecting the public from unprofessional conduct. To assist you in that effort, draft language developed for the Secretary professions will be shared will all boards and commissions as the process moves forward. Together, we must demonstrate to the public that sexual misconduct by health care professionals is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the state of Washington.

Sincerely,

Mary C. Selecky
Secretary

cc: Laurie Jinkins, Department of Health
Bonnie King, Department of Health