

Fast Facts About  
**The NYCERS Medical Board**



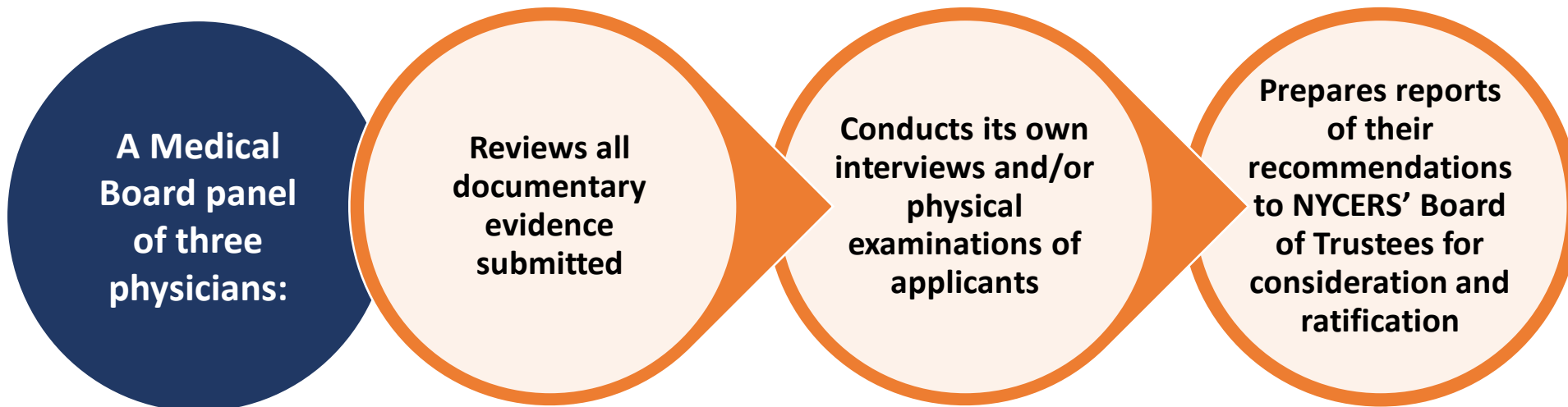
Melanie Whinnery, Executive Director

# The NYCERS Medical Board

**The NYCERS Medical Board is appointed in accordance with the law.**  
(Administrative Code § 13-123)

Consists of independent physicians appointed by:

- NYCERS' Board of Trustees;
- NYC Commissioner of Health and Mental Hygiene; or
- NYC Commissioner of Citywide Administrative Services



# 2019 Law Allowed for More Flexibility

Chapter 249 of the Laws of 2019, effective as of September 16, 2019.

## Chapter 249 Changes

- **Increased the number of physicians** that can be appointed to the Medical Board from five to eight, from each appointing authority
- **Eliminated the requirement** that the three-member panel had to include a physician from each of the three appointing entities

## As a result...

- **More doctors appointed** to the NYCERS Medical Board with key specialties
  - 19 highly experienced physicians
- **More Medical Board panels:**
  - From two per week to five per week\*
  - Three Medical Boards dedicated to WTC applicants each month

\*Excluding holidays

# 2021 Laws Expanded Eligibility

Chapter 424 of the Laws of 2021, effective as of September 10, 2021.

## Chapter 424 of the Laws of 2021

Amended the World Trade Center (WTC) law to include employees who became NYCERS members after the qualifying period, but were employees of a public employer during the covered time period and purchased some or all of that pre-membership period.

As a result...

**Larger pool of individuals eligible for WTC benefits.**

The NYCERS Medical Board expanded the medical specialties to meet the needs of applicants.



- Breast Surgery
- Cardiology
- Critical Care Medicine
- Emergency Medicine
- General Surgery
- Geriatrics
- Gastroenterology

- Hand Surgery
- Internal Medicine
- Medical Oncology
- Neurosurgery
- Oncologic Surgery
- Oncology

- Pain Medicine
- Physiatry
- Pulmonary Medicine
- Pulmonology
- Vascular Surgery

Medical Board physicians are highly-experienced, and several also serve on other Medical Boards, including the FDNY Medical Board and the NYPD Medical Board.

# Medical Board Consulting Specialists

The Medical Board has access to a pool of physicians who may be consulted when additional expertise is needed to make a determination.

- Consulting Specialists provide expertise in many specialties, including, but not limited, to:
  - Psychiatry
  - Orthopedics
  - Radiology
  - Neuropsychology
  - Hand surgery

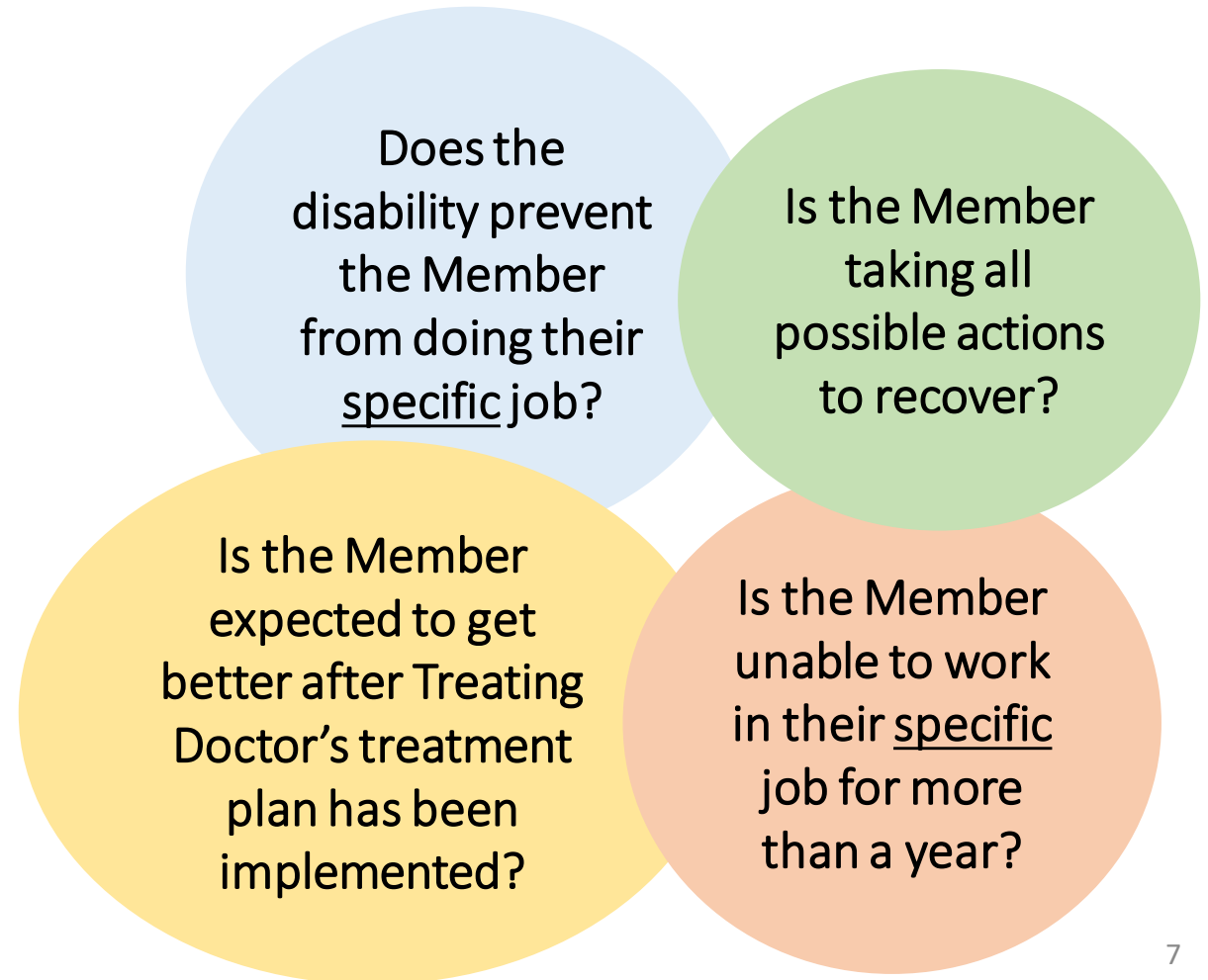
**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Some Consulting Specialists also serve on the **FDNY Medical Board** and the **NYPD Medical Board**.

# Medical Board Evaluation Criteria

- Medical Board panel doctors evaluate Members' applications based on:
  - **All** evidence submitted by the Member, including, but not limited, to:
    - ✓ Treating Doctor's notes
    - ✓ Hospital records and other records and reports
    - ✓ Determinations by other entities, such as Social Security and Workers' Compensation
    - ✓ Other evidence (e.g., Line of Duty reports from the Employer, images provided by the member)
  - An interview
  - An examination of the Member (if needed)

The interview/evaluation seeks to address four questions:



# 6 Facts to Know About the Medical Board Process

## Fact #1:

**Timely submission of documentary evidence to support a claim is critical.**

The Medical Board must review all documentary evidence a Member submits to support their application **before** the Member can be scheduled for an appointment with the Medical Board.

## Fact #2:

**The Medical Board may require additional action after reviewing all documentary evidence/ conducting an interview.**

They may determine:

- Additional documentary evidence is needed;
- An appointment with a Medical Consultant Specialist is required; and/or
- The Medical Board interview/exam needs to be deferred in order to assess post-surgery improvement

## Fact #3:

**The Medical Board considers the job duties of the title as described in the Job Title Specifications provided by the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS).**



# 6 Facts to Know About the Medical Board Process

## Fact #4:

The Medical Board considers **ALL** documentary evidence submitted from **ALL** sources in their determination.

## Fact #5:

The Medical Board Report is prepared and reviewed before the Member is notified of its recommendation.

## Fact #6:

The Medical Board will re-evaluate a recommendation prior to the Board of Trustees' ratification if new documentary evidence is submitted.

# Medical Board Enhancements

**We've made a lot of progress...**

- Since 2017, **eight new Medical Board physicians** have been added to the Board and four have transitioned off.
- In 2021, NYCERS had its **first all-female Medical Board** and has had more than six all-female Medical boards since then.
- **Dynamic COVID-19 response:**
  - Moved all aspects of the Medical Board interviews to a larger room to allow for social distancing
  - Staff wears personal protective equipment
  - Disinfect room in between interview/examinations
- Host an annual Medical Board conference to review new or revised disability laws and policies, strengthen Medical Board reports, and introduce new technology with the participation of:
  - NYCERS Medical Board doctors
  - NYCERS Legal Division and business leaders

**DID YOU  
KNOW?**

Since 2017,  
NYCERS has  
reduced WTC  
Notices of  
Participation  
waiting for  
verification by  
nearly **90%**

...and we're committed to continuous improvement!

- Applicants and their attorneys can now **upload, review and access medical records online** via a secured portal
- Members can **file Notices of Participation electronically** by uploading or emailing the completed application
- Members are now able to **appear before the NYCERS Board of Trustees via video conference**
- Members can **file for Disability Retirement**, and access correspondence and other important information online in their **MyNYCERS account**
- **Added two WTC Case Management Specialists**
- Ongoing updates to disability letters, fact sheets to clarify questions and the application process

# The Medical Board Commitment

The Chair of the Medical Board and the physicians who serve on the Medical Board are committed to providing **independent, fair and consistent assessments** for all Members who file an application for disability benefits. They provide that service in an efficient and professional manner.