

## Idaho Statesman, Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2011 – Staff report

# Idaho medical board on top of doctor check-ups

Before Idaho doctors can practice, they must be approved by the state Board of Medicine. When it comes to one type of background check that is available to all state medical boards, Idaho is one of the most aggressive in the country.

The board ran 776 queries of the National Practitioner Data Bank to obtain information on medical and osteopathic doctors between January 2010 and October 2011, according to data from the Association of Health Care Journalists.

What's the data bank? It's a federal database that tracks malpractice payments and disciplinary actions. Idaho's board was unusually active in checking it, especially for a rural state that has few doctors per capita.

How does Idaho compare? California consulted the NPDB less than half as many times as Idaho, despite having more physicians than Nampa has people. The Idaho Board of Medicine queried the database seven times more than the national median.

Idaho licensed about 330 doctors last year. The board looked up each of them in the NPDB. Nancy Kerr, executive director, said that's a matter of routine for the board. The doctors are subject to criminal background checks and various searches when they apply for licenses and when the board receives complaints, she said.