

Consumer Advisory: Botox®

Beth Lindstrom, Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation in conjunction with Nancy Achin Audesse, Executive Director of the Board of Registration in Medicine and Helen Peveri, Executive Director of the Board of Registration of Cosmetology wish to warn consumers not to undergo Botox® or any other medical procedure in a Cosmetology Salon.

The Cosmetology Board prohibits the use of syringes or the performance of cosmetic medical procedures in cosmetology salons. The Cosmetology Board is charged with establishing and administering sanitary standards for cosmetology salons and those standards are not established to provide the level of sterilization necessary for the provision of medical care. Similarly, the Board prohibits piercing and tattooing in cosmetology salons.

The Board of Medicine advises that licensed medical doctors may only provide medical care in a professionally appropriate setting and may only provide medical care after they have entered into a valid and informed doctor-patient relationship. The administration of Botox or any medical treatment presupposes that a doctor has conducted a thorough medical examination of the patient and taken a complete history. The physician must also be equipped to handle any emergencies that may arise in the delivery of the treatment.

Audesse also decried a rise in "Botox® parties" being held in spas, salons and private homes. She pointed to an April 2002 statement from the American Academy of Dermatology stating, " 'A casual social activity for the purpose of administering botulinum toxin, such as a Botox® Party,' is an inappropriate and a potentially dangerous setting for performing medical procedures of any kind," said Fred F. Castrow II, MD, President of the American Academy of Dermatology. 'As with any medical procedure, the possibility of adverse effects occurring from a botulinum toxin injection is always a possibility. Therefore, the American Academy of Dermatology strongly believes that patient safety comes first and should not be taken lightly under any circumstance.'"

Audesse added, "Clearly, any administration of Botox® or other substances outside a professional medical setting is incompatible with the high standards that the medical profession has established." Audesse warned that the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine would not tolerate unsafe medical care from physicians or unlicensed medical practice from non-physicians who are often involved in these actions.

Both Lindstrom and Audesse stressed that consumers should consult a licensed physician when considering medical treatments such as Botox® injections and should insist that all treatment be provided in a sterile environment equipped to provide these services safely. For example, a day spa that accommodate several different professional disciplines, including cosmetology and medically

supervised dermatology or plastic surgery in separate and distinct physical locations may be permissible. Finally, consumers are advised to exercise good judgment and to always verify that a professional is licensed and in good standing before engaging their services.

For more information contact:

www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/hd

www.massmedboard.org