



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions
Public Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2024

Board Members Present:

William Ahearn, Acting Chair
Kathleen Tucker, Public Member
Kristen Woodbury, Member (arrived at 10:13 a.m.)
Amy Vercillo, Member (left the meeting at 1:11 p.m.)
Kathryn Stevens, Member (left the meeting at 12:51 p.m.)
Cynthia Belhumeur, Public Member
Ashley Williams, Member
Susan Egan, Member (left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.)
Frank Gomez, Member

Staff Members Present:

Brian Bialas, Executive Director
Michael Egan, Board Counsel
Doris Lugo, Investigator

All board members and staff appeared by videoconference.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

Roll Call for Attendance

Mr. Bialas called the roll of board members. William Ahearn, Kathleen Tucker, Kristen Woodbury, Amy Vercillo, Kathryn Stevens, Cynthia Belhumeur, Ashley Williams, Susan Egan, and Frank Gomez all present by videoconference.

Board Business

- **Public Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2024:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Belhumeur, seconded by Ms. Tucker, to approve the Public Meeting

Minutes of November 15, 2024 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- **Executive Session Minutes of November 15, 2024:** After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Belhumeur, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to approve the Executive Session Minutes of November 15, 2024 as drafted. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Ratification of Decisions by Board Staff to Approve Applications:** The Board considered whether to approve the decisions made by staff on applications processed since the last meeting. A motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Tucker, to approve the decisions made by staff on applications processed since the last Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Application Processing Under Application Review Policy:** Mr. Bialas presented application review data and noted that the number of applications reviewed in 2024 already has exceeded the number of applications reviewed in 2023.

Ms. Woodbury arrived at 10:13 a.m.

Dr. Egan recused herself from consideration of the following matter and left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Hearing on Denial of Application

- **Lauren LaCara, Applicant for LMHC:** Ms. LaCara appeared with her attorney William Keating for a hearing on the denial of her application because her master's degree was only 36 credits, and she did not complete a pre-master's degree internship. Mr. Keating noted that Ms. LaCara received her degree before the current regulations were in effect, and she "can't go back to school now." Mr. Bialas explained that although Ms. LaCara is unable to obtain an additional degree to make up additional credits and an internship under the current regulations, under the Board's new proposed regulations, she would be able to obtain an additional degree to meet those requirements without completing a 60-credit master's degree program.

After a brief discussion, the Board continued the hearing at Ms. LaCara's request.

LMHC Application Review Interviews – Reference

- **Matthew Friend**
 - **Interview of Former Supervisor Ira Gooch:** Mr. Gooch appeared to discuss the supplemental information he provided regarding his reference for Mr. Friend. He explained that, as clinic director, he supervised Mr. Friend and signed off on his experience hours for licensure because "nothing was wrong at that point." The clinic later discovered that Mr. Friend billed for 53-minute client appointments

although his appointments were much shorter than that. Mr. Friend learned about billing practices in group supervision sessions but not during individual supervision sessions with Mr. Gooch because Mr. Friend never asked.

LMHC Application Reviews – Education

- **Sophia Brown:** The Board reviewed documentation of Ms. Brown's education. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Stevens, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to allow Ms. Brown to continue with the licensing process. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Carolina Polanco Rosario:** The Board reviewed Ms. Rosario's request to take additional coursework for licensure in four subject areas. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to inform Ms. Rosario that she may take additional qualifying coursework in those areas.

LMHC Application Review Interviews – Reference

- **Matthew Friend**
 - **Interview of Matthew Friend:** Mr. Friend appeared to discuss his application, specifically the information with which Mr. Gooch supplemented his reference for Mr. Friend. Mr. Friend explained that he asked the Billing Department whether to change the amount billed for a session if a session was shorter than scheduled – the Department said no. At one point, the Department even asked him to change his billing to a longer session than what he initially entered into the system. He did not receive training on billing, and billing was not discussed in supervision. The amount he was paid was based on how much he billed.

After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to allow Mr. Friend to continue with the licensing process provided he signs a conditional licensure agreement requiring: (1) one year of biweekly supervision meetings with a Board-approved supervisor; (2) quarterly reports provided to the Board from the supervisor discussing Mr. Friend's supervision; and (3) a petition from Mr. Friend to terminate the agreement once all requirements have been satisfied. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

LMHC Application Review – Reciprocity

- **Hopeton Shaw:** The Board reviewed additional documentation regarding Mr. Shaw's education. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to ask Mr. Shaw for an official transcript from the White Institute and for syllabi for the courses he says cover the Human Growth and Development and Social and Cultural Foundations subject-matter areas.

NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Requests

- **Euclides Gibau:** The Board reviewed Mr. Gibau's request. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Stevens, to allow Mr. Gibau 50% extra time and the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Cecilia Ashu:** The Board reviewed Ms. Ashu's request. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Gomez, to allow Ms. Ashu 50% extra time, the use of a word-for-word translation dictionary, and enlarged text. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Monitoring

- **Robert Safion, 2021-000973-IT-ENF, Approval of Proposed Supervisor:** The Board reviewed Mr. Safion's request that the Board accept one proposed supervisor instead of two as required by his consent agreement. After a brief discussion, the Board directed Mr. Bialas to inform Mr. Safion that he must provide two proposed supervisors as required by the agreement.

The Board directed Mr. Bialas to inform Mr. Safion that he may wish to contact the Massachusetts Mental Health Counselors Association (MaMHCA) for assistance in finding an additional proposed supervisor.

- **Xiaoyuan Yuan, Conditional Licensure Agreement, Approval of Proposed Supervisor:** The Board reviewed Ms. Yuan's request for Lynn Perlman to be approved as her supervisor. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Woodbury, seconded by Ms. Stevens, to approve Dr. Perlman as Ms. Yuan's supervisor. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.
- **Jacqueline Dupont, 2021-000408-IT-ENF, Petition to Terminate Probation:** The Board reviewed Ms. Dupont's petition. After a brief discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to accept the petition. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

Comments from Professional Associations

Jami Osborne from MaMHCA discussed applicant concerns, MaMHCA supervision, and the need for the supervised-level license. Midge Williams from MaMHCA discussed the new Unified Recovery and Monitoring Program and a new supervision incentive program sponsored by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Miranda Croteau from the New England Association for Family and Systemic Therapy (NEAFast) discussed a board the association is developing to run the association. Andrea Kremer from NEAFast asked for an update on the pending regulation changes.

Executive Session (closed under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B; specifically, the Board will discuss and evaluate applications and examination accommodation requests that involve medical records and information of patients)

At 11:56 a.m., a motion was made by Mr. Gomez, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to exit the public meeting and (1) enter into a closed executive session under G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to comply with G.L. c. 4, § 7, ¶ 26(c) and G.L. c. 214, § 1B; specifically, the Board will discuss and evaluate applications and examination accommodation requests that involve medical records and information of patients; then (2) enter into quasi-judicial session under G.L. c. 30A, § 18 to review a final decision and order; then (3) enter into investigative conference under G.L. c. 112, § 65C to conduct a case interview and review new cases; and then, after the conclusion of the investigative conference, (4) not return to the public meeting and adjourn. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The Board entered executive session at 11:56 a.m.

Board maintains separate minutes of executive session.

Quasi-Judicial Session (closed under G.L. c. 30A, § 18)

The Board entered quasi-judicial session at 12:41 p.m.

During the quasi-judicial session, the Board took the following action:

Final Decision and Order

AMH-2023-0022 (SP):	Approved issuance of final decision and order and determined sanction
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Ms. Stevens left the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

Investigative Conference (closed session under G.L. c. 112, § 65C)

At 11:51 a.m., a motion was made by Dr. Williams, seconded by Ms. Woodbury, to exit executive session and enter into investigative conference under G.L. c. 112, § 65C to conduct a case interview and review new cases. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The Board entered investigative conference at 11:51 p.m.

During the investigative conference, the Board took the following actions:

Case Interview

AMH-2023-0016 (JP):	Interviewed respondent
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Dr. Vercillo left the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Refer to the Office of
Prosecutions

Cases

AMH-2023-0039 (AP):

Dr. Ahearn recused himself
from consideration of the
case. The Board will review
the case when a quorum of
members is available.

AMH-2023-0028 (BH):

Dismiss

AMH-2023-0041 (MK):

Dismiss

AMH-2024-0001 (AB):

Dismiss

Adjournment

At 1:38 p.m., a motion was made by Ms. Tucker, seconded by Ms. Belhumeur, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Approval

The above minutes were approved at the public meeting held on January 17, 2025.



Brian Bialas, Executive Director

List of Documents Used by the Board at the Public Meeting:

- Agenda for Meeting of December 20, 2024
- Public Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2024
- Executive Session Minutes of November 15, 2024
- Applications Reviewed Under Application Review Policy: January 1, 2024 through December 19, 2024 and November 1, 2024 through November 30, 2024
- Documents from LMHC Application of Lauren LaCara
- Documents from LMHC Application of Matthew Friend
- Documents from LMHC Application of Sophia Brown
- Documents from LMHC Application of Carolina Polanco Rosario
- Documents from LMHC Application of Hopeton Shaw
- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Euclides Gibau

- NCMHCE ESL Accommodation Request of Cecilia Ashu
- Robert Safion, 2021-000973-IT-ENF, Submission of Proposed Supervisor
- Xiaoyuan Yuan, Conditional Licensure Agreement, Submission of Proposed Supervisor
- Jacqueline Dupont, 2021-000408-IT-ENF, Petition to Terminate Probation