Department of Public Health

Bureau of Health Professions Licensure

Board of Registration of Respiratory Care

I am writing to the Board to express my profound disapproval of the proposed provisions (increase in CEUs, the manner in which they are obtained, and the proposed mandated topics) for continuing education required for the renewal of respiratory therapist licensure.

I am a practicing respiratory therapist since 1980 and an active member of both the NBRC and AARC. Most of my career has been in a managerial capacity and I am aware how difficult it is to maintain staffing levels and try to meet the demands of staff to attend seminars, conferences, and even teleconferences. In the majority of departments, the staffing levels are very limited, leaving few possibilities for staff to take personal days. With that in mind, I have observed and experienced the stress involved in trying to get opportunities for personal time to attend seminars. In one of the hospitals where I was employed, staff could not attend seminars on an annual basis. Staff members were part of a rotation that limited them to one conference day per year. ( I should clarify that this did not apply to Directors, Assistant Directors, or Supervisors).

Those of you on the Board must take pause and realize that aside from the jousting for education days, each therapist may have reasons and issues in their daily lives where in a moment’s notice they need to request time off: doctor’s/dentist’s appointments, sick children, car trouble, etc. These daily life events will dwindle the average therapist’s opportunities for personal time and make the decision for what needs to take precedence more difficult.

The time that we all have in our daily lives can be viewed much like a pie that our day to day responsibilities in life take a slice of. At the end of the day or the end of a week, there isn’t much left. Interestingly enough, the institutes of higher education recognized the time constraints on potential students and offered online/distant learning. Since we have this amazing opportunity, which in many cases have allowed therapists to achieve a baccalaureate or master’s degree; why not let us use this vehicle to satisfy the CEU requirement? It will eliminate demands on departmental staffing and allow the therapists to obtain them at a pace that is agreeable with their personal time constraints.

So, why would the Board want to make maintaining a license to practice respiratory care in the state of Massachusetts more difficult, more stressful? Aside from adding the extra financial burden, is adding 15 more CEUs to the requirement going to make us better clinicians? If nothing else, with the increased cost, it will give therapists another reason not to join the AARC!

Why mandate subject matter that for the most part has no clinical basis for the majority of practicing therapists?If we are paying for the CEUs, should we not be the ones that choose topics that most interest us and aide directly in our own clinical practice?

In closing, please consider the cost factor that is attached to your proposed provisions. There are many therapists that are just beginning their careers, getting married, buying homes, starting families, who will find maintaining a license to practice in Massachusetts financially challenging under your proposed provisions.

Please keep the the CEU requirement at 15, allow us to satisfy them through self study, and don’t mandate the topics of our education.

Respectfully,

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