

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

THIS AGENDA CONSTITUTES NOTICE OF THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETING LAW, M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20

Tuesday, December 8, 2020
12:30 p.m.

General Session is open to the public and will be held via Webex at:
<https://statema.webex.com/statema/j.php?MTID=m7ec4fb98647cceb9fc84692367a9eb8>
Call-In Telephone number 1-866-692-3580 (toll-free)
Meeting Number/Access Code: 178 513 6894
Meeting Password: p8nXbvBXm23

Agenda

All votes must be via roll call

Time	Item #	Item	Exhibits	Staff Contact
12:30p.m.	I	Call to Order & Introductions Determination of Quorum Notice of Electronic Recording	None	Board Chair
	II	Conflict of Interest Approval of Agenda	Draft Agenda	Board Chair
	III	Approval of Minutes: A. November 23, 2020	Draft Minutes	Board Chair
	IV	Board Elections	None	Executive Director
	V	Proposed Changes to 272 CMR 4.00	Draft of Proposed Changes to 272 CMR 4.00	Board Counsel
	VI	CHW Renewal Survey Discussion	CHW Renewal Survey	Executive Director

	VII	<u>Flex Session</u> A. Announcements B. Topics for future agenda 1. Tiering 2. Reciprocity	None	Board Chair and Executive Director
	VIII	<u>Executive Session: N/A</u>	N/A	Board Counsel
	IX	<u>65C Session: N/A</u>	N/A	Board Counsel
	X	<u>Adjudicatory Session: N/A</u>	N/A	Board Counsel
4:00 p.m.	XI	Adjournment: Next meeting scheduled for January 12, 2021.	N/A	Board Chair

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BOARD OF CERTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, December 8, 2020
2:00pm

VIA WEBEX

239 Causeway Street
Room 417
Boston, MA 02114

Board Members Present: Claire Santarelli, DPH, Chair
Joanne Calista, Community Health Worker Training Organization Representative, Vice Chair
Sheila Och, Community Health Worker 2
Catherine Bourassa, Community-Based CHW Employer
Susan Dargon-Hart, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers Representative
Denise Lau, Public Board Member
Sharon George, Community Health Worker 4

Board Members Not Present: Hugo E. Santos, Community Health Worker 3

Staff Present: Steven Joubert, Executive Director, BHPL
Karen Geoghegan, Assistant Executive Director, BHPL
Mary Strachan, Board Counsel, DPH
James D. Neal, Office Support Specialist, BHPL
Walens Noel, Office Support Specialist, BHPL

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

Ms. Claire Santarelli, Board Chair, called the meeting of the Board of Certification of Community Health Workers to order at 2:04pm and provided verbal notice of recording. A quorum was established with members present via WebEx as follows: Joanne Calista: Present; Susan Dargon-Hart: Present; Sharon George: present; Denise Lau: Present; Sheila Och: Present; Claire Santarelli: Present. Absent: Hugo Santos.

II. Approval of Board Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda was reviewed.

There was a discrepancy with the start time on the web posting. As a result, the Board met at 2:00pm rather than the usual 12:30pm to ensure that members of the public had the opportunity to attend. Board members were thanked for their flexibility.

DISCUSSION:

None.

ACTION:

Ms. Joanne Calista made a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Ms. Denise Lau seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by roll call vote as follows: Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

Document: December 8, 2020 Board Meeting Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes: November 23, 2020

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Lau presented some formatting edits.

ACTION:

Motion to approve the November 23, 2020 minutes with edits by Ms. Catherine Bourassa seconded by Ms. Santarelli and passed unanimously by roll call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

Document: November 23, 2020 Minutes

IV. Board Elections

A. Vice-Chair

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Lau nominated Ms. Calista to remain as Board Vice Chair. Ms. Calista accepted the nomination.

ACTION:

Motion by Ms. Lau for Ms. Calista to remain as Board Vice Chair, seconded by Ms. Susan Dargon-Hart and unanimously passed by roll call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

B. Secretary

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Santarelli nominated Ms. Lau to remain as Board Secretary. Ms. Lau accepted the nomination.

ACTION:

Motion by Ms. Santarelli for Ms. Lau to remain as Board Secretary, seconded by Ms. Calista and unanimously passed by roll-call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

V. Proposed Changes to 272 CMR 4.00

Board Counsel, Ms. Mary Strachan, walked the Board through the proposed changes to 272 CMR 4.00 and briefly reviewed the steps in the regulatory amendment process with the Board.

DISCUSSION:

Board Counsel made changes to 272 CMR 4.02 paragraph 3b to reflect the Board's decision to extend the sunset date of the experience-only pathway to certification for one renewal cycle. Because the Board does not yet have any approved training programs, Board Counsel suggested that the Board change the language in this section from "for a three period" to a five year period. She also said that the Chief Board Counsel confirmed that the language requested (i.e. that the pathway could be extended up to 2 cycles, at the discretion of the Board) was too vague for a regulation and would likely not pass administrative review. At the November meeting, the Board had voted to extend the experience-only pathway for one additional cycle in the event that the proposed language was deemed to be too vague.

272 CMR 4.03 § 1a was edited to reflect the new sunset date of the experience-only pathway.

272 CMR 4.04 § 1 was edited to reflect the expiration date of the CHW certificates (July 31 of odd-numbered years) and make it consistent with the practice.

272 CMR 4.04 § 2b was edited to include language that waives the CEU requirements for CHWs who have completed an approved education and training program within one year of certificate issuance. Ms. Santarelli stated that she felt this regulation should be part of the section on CEUs (i.e. 272 CMR 5.00) rather than with the section surrounding fees. Ms. Santarelli noted that the Board did want to discuss waiving the fee for similar cases, expressing concern for CHWs who are certified very close to the renewal cycle. She stated that she wanted to avoid a scenario where a CHW who is certified on July 1st of an odd numbered year would still be required to pay their renewal fee 30 days later. Board staff stated that there were systems issues that prevented waiving the fees. Ms. Strachan noted that the Board seemed to be talking about two different things – the first being the July 31st expiration date and the second being the fee and CEU requirements for newly certified CHWs. She asked how Board members felt about separating out these topics. Ms. Susan Dargon-Hart and Ms. Och stated that this made sense.

Ms. Lau expressed confusion with the way that the new language was worded in the regulations. Ms. Strachan agreed, now that she heard it out loud. She recommended language that would read something similar to, "A certificate issued pursuant to 272 CMR 4.03 shall be valid for a two-year period, commencing with the date of initial issuance and expiring on July 31st of the odd numbered years." This new language would put the regulations in line with the practice. Ms. Santarelli and Ms. Lau expressed confusion with the "two year period" portion, as a CHW who is certified during the even numbered year would be certified for less than a two-year period. Ms. Santarelli remarked that she wanted the process to be fair to all and that all certified CHWs should have enough time to complete their CEUs for renewal, no matter when they were certified within the cycle. Executive Director, Mr. Steven Joubert presented another way of looking at it. He clarified that if someone is issued a certificate at any point during the two-year period between renewals, then it is really valid for that *certificate period*. Ms. Santarelli stated that made sense but worried that this process inadvertently would give the people who apply later in the cycle a disadvantage. Ms. Karen Geoghegan noted that all of the Boards within the Bureau operate with this framework. Ms. Strachan stated that unfortunately, the Board does have to work within the constraints of technology and noted that this is an issue for all Boards when people apply towards the end of the cycle.

Ms. Santarelli stated that she wanted to avoid a scenario where someone who is certified in April expires in July

and asked if there was any possibility that a person in that scenario could be included as part of the *following* renewal cycle. Board Staff clarified that this is not possible as MLO sorts renewals by license or certificate type rather than by issuance date. Ms. Strachan clarified that the shortened certificate period is only applicable for the first period after issuance – all subsequent cycles are a full two years. Board members expressed their concern for asking CHWs, whose salaries are typically lower than other health professionals, to pay the certification fee twice in once year. Board staff reminded the Board that this affects everyone who has a license or certificate within BHPL and that the renewal fee for CHWs is significantly lower than that of any other Board. Mr. Joubert stated that some Boards opt to waive the CEU requirement for the first renewal cycle, which can alleviate some of the burden of fees. Ms. Santarelli asked Ms. Strachan which the original proposed language was meant to waive – the fees or the CEUs. Ms. Strachan clarified that it was intended to waive the CEUs for the first renewal cycle, as a new certificate holder would presumably have learned up-to-date information in their training program.

ACTION:

Motion to edit 272 CMR 4.02 paragraph B to reflect the new sunset date of the experience-only pathway (July 31, 2023); 272 CMR 4.03 to note said new sunset date; 272 CMR 4.04 paragraph 1 to reflect the accurate expiration date of CHW certificates; and the legal citation under regulatory authority by Ms. Lau, seconded by Ms. Calista and unanimously approved by roll-call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

After the Board voted, Ms. Strachan stated that she would bring 272 CMR 5.00, edited to include language waiving the CEUs, to the Board in January.

As the regulations are now being sent up for regulatory review, Ms. Santarelli asked if there were other changes that needed to be made. Ms. Strachan pointed the Board to some confusing language. She stated that 272 CMR 4.02 paragraph 4 states that “the individual must be deemed competent in each of the ten Core Competencies by at least three individuals” and 272 CMR 4.03 paragraph 1b states that “Each reference form must include a rating other than ‘not applicable’ for at least eight of the ten Core Competencies.” She stated that the intention of the regulation was to indicate that an individual needs to be competent in the ten Core Competencies, but that each reference only needs to attest that the individual is competent in at least eight so long as all ten Core Competencies are covered across their three references. Ms. Gail Hirsch noted that she would look at the application form to see what the Board had decided on that language. The application language, edited to read in the third person reads, “Each reference must rate the applicant in at least 8 of the 10 Core Competencies (N/A does not count as a rating). When the Board reviews the applicant’s references, it will be necessary for the applicant to have received at least one rating in each of the Core Competencies.” Ms. Strachan and the Board agreed that this verbiage was much clearer.

Ms. Kim Smith, a member of the public, posed a question to the Board – she has a therapeutic mentor who is applying through the work experience pathway. She wanted to know if this person has until June 2023 to apply. Ms. Santarelli stated that these are proposed changes to the regulations and that they will still need to go through the regulatory review process, but that the Board is hoping to extend the experience-only pathway to that date.

Ms. Strachan stated that she would make the changes to the regulations and would bring them back in January. She noted that she would like to be able to submit them to the Commissioner’s Office after that meeting.

VI. CHW Renewal Survey Discussion

Mr. Joubert explained that system issues prevented the renewal survey from being presented as optional to

certificate holders through MLO. Ms. Hirsch presented some of the background surrounding the intent of the survey. Within the DPH Bureau of Community Health and Prevention there is a Healthcare Workforce Center. It is mandated by the second phase of health care reform in Massachusetts to gather data about the various workforces that the primary care office tracks and DPH credentials. This center also used to create health professions data series sets on the various clinical workforces in Massachusetts, which were reported to the legislature. The Office of Community Health Workers used to be a part of the Healthcare Workforce Center and during that time, the Board drafted a survey that would fit within the health profession data set series. This survey was intended to gather information when CHWs renewed their certificates so that it could be available to the Office of Community Health Workers, Bureau of Health Profession Licensure, and the Healthcare Workforce Center. At one point, the Healthcare Workforce Center was planning on including that data in their report to the legislature. She stated that she did not know what the status of those reports were. She clarified that the survey was not requested by the legislature, but that the Office of CHWs saw it as a great opportunity to promote and highlight the role of CHWs in primary care.

With this background, the Board needed to decide whether or not they wanted the survey to be optional or mandatory for renewal. Ms. Geoghegan noted that there had been a similar survey for Physician Assistants renewal several years ago. Ms. Lau asked if that survey had been mandatory and Board staff confirmed that it was mandatory, because MLO requires an “either/or” format, e.g., either it applies to all or none. Ms. Och stated that she felt that the survey was important, but so was not making certification contingent on completing the survey. She stated that she was trying to balance the two and asked if it would be possible for the survey to be hosted outside of MLO. Ms. Geoghegan answered that BHPL does not have another mechanism to implement a survey. Ms. Och asked if the Office of CHWs had a method to host this survey where the Board could direct people to take it voluntarily. Ms. Lau also agreed that she felt that the survey was important. Ms. Santarelli noted that the Office of CHWs does have a variety of other methods to get this information but that there were limitations to them. She stated that she felt that since the Board had been intentional about not adding undue barriers with regards to certification, it felt consistent to not require the survey for renewal.

ACTION:

Motion not to include the CHW survey as a requirement for certification renewal process by Ms. Bourassa, seconded by Ms. Calista and unanimously approved by roll-call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

Ms. Calista noted that while the Board would have preferred to include this survey as optional with certification renewal, systems barriers prevented that from being possible. The Board did not want to make certification contingent on completion of this survey.

VII. Flex Session

A. Announcements:

N/A

B. Topics for the next agenda:

Ms. Lau noted that she would like to review the minutes from the previous executive session when the Board met next month while it was fresh in Board member’s minds.

VIII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:54 by Ms. Santarelli, seconded by Ms. Lau and unanimously approved by roll-call vote as follows: Catherine Bourassa: Yes; Joanne Calista: yes; Susan Dargon-Hart: yes; Sharon

George: yes; Denise Lau: yes; Sheila Och: yes; Claire Santarelli: yes. Abstained: None; Recused: None; Absent: Hugo Santos.

The next meeting of the Board of Certification of Community Health Workers is scheduled for Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

Respectfully submitted:

The Board of Certification of Community Health Workers