

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF REGISTRATION OF GENETIC COUNSELORS

**250 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108**

Thursday, October 3, 2024

VIA WebEx

9:30 AM

GENERAL SESSION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

(Open Session)

Board Members Present: Allison Cirino, Genetic Counselor, Board Chair
Diane Ahern, Genetic Counselor, Vice-Chair
Stephanie Coury, Genetic Counselor
Shelley McCormick, Genetic Counselor

Board Members

Not Present: Jillian Fleming, Public Member

Staff Present:

Lauren Nelson, Deputy Director, BHPL, DPH
Steven Joubert, Executive Director, Multi-Boards. BHPL
Tracy Tam, Assistant Executive Director, Multi-Boards. BHPL
Kayla Mikalauski, Management Analyst, Multi-Boards, BHP
Carol Larkin, Office Support Specialist, Multi-Boards, BHPL
Rebecca Barros, Board Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, BHPL
Jonathan Dillon, Director of Policy, BHPL, DPH
Gillian Coffey, Health Communications Manager, BHPL, DPH
Mark Waksmonski, SARP Coordinator, BHPL DPH
Edmund Taglieri, PSUD Supervisor, BHPL, DPH
Shana Kaplan, URAMP Intern, BHPL, DPH

I. Call to Order | Determination of Quorum

At 9:33 a.m. Ms. Allison Cirino, Board Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the meeting to order. Ms. Cirino reminded board members the meeting was being recorded and asked for a roll call vote to determine quorum.

Roll call as follows: Allison Cirino: present; Diane Ahearn: present; Stephanie Coury: present
Absent: Jillian Fleming, Shelley McCormick

II. Approval of General Session Agenda | Conflict of Interest

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Allison Cirino asked if any board members needed to recuse themselves from an item listed on the agenda. No recusals were noted.

ACTION:

Ms. Allison Cirino made a motion to approve the agenda as written, which was seconded by Ms. Stephanie Coury, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Allison Cirino: approve; Diane Ahearn: approve; Stephanie Coury: approve.
Absent: Jillian Fleming, Shelley McCormick

Document: October 3, 2024, General Session Agenda

III. Approval of Minutes

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Allison Cirino asked board members to review the minutes and make a motion to approve when ready.

ACTION:

Ms. Allison Cirino made a motion to approve the minutes as written, which was seconded by Ms. Stephanie Coury, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Allison Cirino: approve; Diane Ahearn: approve; Stephanie Coury: approve.
Absent: Jillian Fleming, Shelley McCormick

Document: October 03, 2024, General Session Minutes

Ms. Shelley McCormick joined the meeting at 9:37 am.

IV. Unified Recovery and Monitoring Program

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Steven Joubert introduced Mr. Jonathan Dillon to the board. Mr. Jonathan Dillon was the presenter and stated that within the legislation of Chapter 177 of the Acts of 2022- An Act Addressing Barriers to Care for Mental Health URAMP was established. URAMP is a voluntary program for monitoring the rehabilitation of licensed health care professionals who seek support for their mental health or substance abuse or who are referred to the program by a licensing board. URAMP consists of an Advisory Committee, Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee and URAMP operational team.

The primary goal is to promote patient safety while respecting a licensee's condition. The goal is to remove licensee from patient care while they are being monitored. These are the principles of alternative to discipline. The licensing board may dismiss any pending investigation or complaint against a licensed professional that arises from or relates to mental health or substance abuse, upon admittance to the program. The licensing board may change the participants publicly available status to reflect the existence of non-disciplinary restrictions or conditions.

Currently under Chapter 177, there are two boards, Pharmacy and Nursing. The Pharmacy Substance Use Disorder Program is a five-year abstinence-based program available solely to pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians. The Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program is a three-year abstinence-based program available solely to nurses.

The key changes in URAMP unite the current SARP and PSUD programs. But will also be available to all licensees under all 21 boards. It is forecasted that alternative to discipline caseloads will double. Confidential monitoring will help licensees practice safely.

The URAMP Advisory Committee met seven times in 2024 to discuss parts of existing programs. Key points of discussion included staff action, eligibility and admissions criteria, monitoring and peer support requirements, and safe return to practice.

The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee consists of nine members with a knowledge base in mental health and substance abuse disorder. The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (REC) review admissions and makes recommendations for individualized plans. They review and approve gradual return to practice, return of privileges and successful graduation. The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (REC) also reviews and approves plans for participants that have non-successful compliance. The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee reviews and approves non-successful discharge and license surrender. URAMP manages in-program administrative matters pursuant to bureau policies and the URAMP staff action policy. The Rehabilitation Evaluation Committee (REC) and URAMP staff allow licensing boards to focus on their core mission. Changes to a restriction or condition will be approved by individual licensing boards.

Finalizing the project for launch will include appointing, onboarding and training of REC members; transition of existing staff, bidding for new roles and reviewing vendor requirements and completing core URAMP policy and guidance and approval processes. The upcoming processes will include operations, communications and transition. Policies and guidelines are subject to approval.

Mr. Taglieri stated this is a three-to-five-year monitoring program and substance abuse program participants would require monitoring with screening fifteen times a year and an app is used to notify times of random tests. Participants are required to go to four self-help meetings a week and one peer support meeting a week. Mr. Taglieri stated that to graduate in three years, a person would have to petition REC. Mr. Taglieri also stated that while the participant is in recovery, they would have to abstain from alcohol and all medications, unless they are prescribed by a doctor. URAMP staff are authorized to modify/ease a participant's program requirements for return to practice and compliance monitoring. A participant would have to have six months of recovery before restrictions could be lifted.

Mr. Taglieri also stated a participant with mental health issues would have to have bi-monthly mental health counseling, four self-help meetings per week and one peer check-in meeting per week. The participant would need monitoring with urine screening fifteen times a year and an app is used to notify times of random tests. Mr. Taglieri stated that participants with metal health issues may not have to abstain from alcohol and medications, but this would be on a case-by-case basis and decided by REC. When the participant is able to return to work, a supervisor and a URAMP staff will be on

site to ensure success. Mr. Taglieri asked the board members if Genetic Counselors work one on one and board members nodded. Mr. Taglieri recommended to the board that supervisors could make quality assurance calls to clients, but input would be needed by the board. Mr. Taglieri stated that the supervisor would report back quarterly calls to URAMP and URAMP would let the supervisor know if participant has relapsed and needs to be taken out of practice.

Mr. Taglieri wanted to assure the board that URAMP staff are DPH employees and public safety is the first concern and to protect the public. Mr. Taglieri stated that the program is to assist the licensee, but patient and public safety is to be the main concern. Mr. Taglieri also mentioned there are concerns by some boards that they are not using this as a shelter from discipline and the primary focus is to protect the patient. Mr. Taglieri stated that an individual would need to have a mental health evaluation, a recommendation, and an eligible application before entering the program. Mr. Taglieri also stated that URAMP staff would have to be comfortable that the individual was ready for recovery. Mr. Taglieri also states that if the participant withdrew from the program or did not complete the program, the original complaint would resurface, and the board would get involved. The board could then ask for voluntary surrender of the license. Mr. Taglieri stated that restrictions or guard rails are gradually lifted as licensees return to work. Mr. Taglieri stated that his presentation is based on PSUD which is more pharmacy driven.

Mr. Mark Waksmonski stated that his presentation is based on SARP which is more medication and nurse driven and the participant must be out of work six months. Mr. Waksmonski stated that at the end of the six-month period, the participant can request CA 1 nursing privileges without handling medications or a CA 2 with basic medication. URAMP would make sure that participant is compliant before a participant could move to a CA 3. Mr. Waksmonski stated that the participant would have to have completed six months as a CA 2 successfully, have references from therapists and supervisors and satisfactory reports and review from URAMP staff. Mr. Waksmonski explained that a CA 3 has substance control privileges. Mr. Waksmonski also stated that a nurse could only work 40 hours per week on day or evening shifts in structures settings and cannot change shifts. Mr. Waksmonski stated a pre-approved supervisor would have to always be on the premises. At the end of the presentation, Mr. Dillon asked if there were any questions and Ms. Cirino stated not at this time and that there was a lot of information on the slides and the board would review to appropriately tailor information for Genetic Counselors. Ms. Cirino thanked Mr. Dillon for the presentation.

Document: Unified Recovery and Monitoring Program URAMP

V. Flex Session

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Steven Joubert asked for the attendance at the next board meeting scheduled on Thursday, February 6th, 2025, at 9:30 AM. All board members present stated they would be able to attend.

VI. Executive Session

DISCUSSION:

Ms. Allison Cirino, Board Chair, read the Executive Session Statement as follows: The board will meet in Executive Session as authorized pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) for the purposes of discussing the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against an individual. 1. The board will consider approving prior executive session minutes in accordance with M.G.L. ch.30A, § 22(a) for previous executive sessions of the Board. The Board will not reconvene in public session subsequent to the closed session(s).

ACTION:

Motion to move to the Executive Session was made by Ms. Allison Cirino, which was seconded by Ms. Stephanie Coury, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Allison Cirino: approve; Diane Ahearn: approve; Shelley McCormick: approve; Stephanie Coury: approve.
Absent: Jillian Fleming.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business before the board, Ms. Allison Cirino motioned to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Shelley McCormick, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows: Allison Cirino: approve; Diane Ahearn: approve; Shelley McCormick: approve; Stephanie Coury: approve.
Absent: Jillian Fleming.

Let the records show the meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.

The next meeting of the Board of Registration of Genetic Counselors is scheduled for February 6, 2025, via WebEx at 9:30a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
The Board of Registration of Genetic Counselors