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I would like to add the following information to a statement I provided in a public hearing on 7/16/18 regarding the proposed increase in continuing education.

I would like to express my disappointment with access to come before the Board and request input regarding the rationale behind the current proposal. For the record I have been regularly communicating with the Board Administration since October of 2017 via telephone and email in an ongoing effort to learn more about this proposal.

 Here are the dates of my efforts to come before the Board and ask why this drastic proposal was being presented:

10/2017 I emailed and requested to be on the agenda to ask questions about this proposal. I was invited to the November 2017 meeting but was travelling and unable to make it and asked then to be placed on the December 2017 agenda.

11/13/17 I received an email from Ms. Cherfils indicating my request would be automatically added to the December 2017 agenda.

12/8/2017 I wrote expressing disappointment that the November and December 2017 meetings were cancelled and again asked to be on the January 2018 agenda.

12/11/2017 reply from Ms. Cherifls indicating all items on the December agenda would automatically be placed on the January 2018 agenda.

1/9/2018 I again emailed expressing my desire to talk with the Board to get a clear understanding why they were proposing such a drastic change to continuing education.

1/9/2018 Reply from Ms. Cherifls explaining the lengthy approval process and what agencies were involved and on 1/10/2018 I replied again expressing my desire to come before the Board and ask questions about the proposal.

3/19/18 I called the day before the meeting to confirm and learned the meeting was cancelled.

4/2018 I attended the meeting and was a few minutes late. I learned upon arrival I was not on the agenda. This was my last opportunity to ask the Board questions about the continuing education changes prior to the schedule July 2018 public hearing because I was unable to make the May 2018 meeting because of scheduling and the June 2018 public hearing was canceled.

Here is the text from my email in April of 2018:

Hello,
I was a few minutes late for your scheduled Board meeting yesterday and was unable to hear the first part of the meeting concerning continuing education. Was there an opportunity for discussion yesterday as I thought I would be on the agenda per my previous requests and replies stating the items on the agenda from the previously canceled meetings would be automatically added to the agenda? I would like to hear directly from the Board the reasoning behind the proposed doubling of required continuing education and the proposed mandate for restricting how many contact hours can be earned on line.

 I was able to pick up on the tone and comments about "that lady who keeps writing letters".  As you all know I have been making every effort to come before the Board and speak with them directly since October of 2017 in the hopes of learning more about this proposal and clear up any confusion.  It was disappointing to hear the negative comments from the Chairman about my efforts to address a public Board and my desire to participate in a Public Hearing regarding such a drastic change to a State regulation. I did, however, welcome the Chairman's comments yesterday noting he has never been a Board member of the MSRC, a private organization he has been very involved with. I know a public hearing will be scheduled for some time in July 2018 but from what I heard yesterday all of the Board members will not be present and there will not be an opportunity for questions and answers regarding the proposal, something I hope to have so myself and others can have a clear understanding of the Boards reasoning behind it and be able to respond accordingly at the proposed Public Hearing.

I also would like to make a request.  While I realize the Commonwealth is always looking for ways to communicate in an economical, paper free manner, is it possible for the Licensure Board to email licensees about this proposed upcoming public hearing regarding the dramatic continuing education change. I know that myself and others recently received a confirmation email when we renewed our RT licenses in the last few weeks. This would certainly show the Boards effort to hear from the effected community (licensed respiratory therapists) in a very efficient and economical manner that embraces the agencies effort to go paperless. I think everyone will agree that many if not most licensed RT's in the Commonwealth rarely visit the Board of Respiratory Cares website other than to check or renew a license, thereby making the online announcement available to a limited audience. I also heard yesterday that  notice of the public hearing will be placed in 2 News Papers, one in Boston and one in Western MA. I think reaching the RT's via the emails they provided for license renewal will reach more RT's who I'm certain would like to provide an opinion on this matter and wonder if there is any law in MA preventing this type of communication in addition to the ones mentioned yesterday so that a broader audience could be reached?

I received a prompt response to my April 2018 email from Atty Strahan outlining the laws surrounding Public Hearings and the laws surrounding providing email address of licensees. While I appreciated that input I never received a response to my continued request to come before the Board and that is regrettable.

To say that I have tirelessly tried to learn the motivation behind this change would be an understatement. Having such limited access to the very people who will be deciding this change makes discussing it at a Public Hearing difficult because at no time was there an opportunity for anyone to receive answers to their questions , understanding the “Public Hearing” is one sided. Rather attendees provided statements based on little to no input from the Board members making the proposal. Anyone researching information behind this proposal only had access to online minutes that are from October 2017, 9 months ago. I think it is fair to say that the very limited access to current information regarding this proposed change, that will have a significant impact on our profession, certainly had a negative impact on those who took the time to try and learn more about it.

I hope the Board of Respiratory Care will recognize the lack of available public information and access to it by myself and others, who made the effort to better understand why the majority of the Board of Respiratory Care feels this drastic change in continuing education is even being considered.

Thank you,

Holly Saurman