

Board of Registration of Optometry

Public Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: October 21, 2020 TIME: 10:00am

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Everett Sabree, OD

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Bruce Rakusin, OD

DPL Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Michael Hawley, Executive Director

Lynn Read, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Associate Executive Dir.

Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM by Dr. Sabree

Review of minutes:

- September 16, 2020

Dr. Willinger moved to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2020 meeting as written. Dr. Sarkis seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “abstain”

Board officer elections:

Dr. Rakusin nominated Dr. Sabree to continue to serve as chairperson and Dr. Willinger to continue as secretary. Dr. Sarkis seconded. Both members accepting the nomination, the motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “yes”

Meeting Schedule for 2021

The Board directed staff to schedule board meetings for the third Wednesday of each month excepting July and February.

Report from Executive Director:

- MassHealth Participation: Mr. Hawley reported that MassHealth reports 90% Optometry licensee participation in MassHealth as a billing or non-billing provider. Plans are being formulated to follow-up with non-participating individuals.

Legal Update from Board Counsel, Lynn Read:

- Attorney Read stated that she did not have a report separate from the Discussion items on today’s Agenda.

Discussion:

- Emergency policy for reciprocal and reinstated licenses – the Board briefly discussed a policy for improvement of the reinstatement and reciprocal/endorsement licensing processes. The Board agreed to table the policy for review and discussing at a future meeting. Attorney Read will work with Dr. Sewell on the language.
- New England College of Optometry (“NECO”) demonstration of interactive remote continuing education courses (“CE”) – Dr. Gary Chu, of NECO, demonstrated an example of how NECO conducts interactive CE courses remotely. He demonstrated and answered the Board’s questions about how the courses are monitored and conducted as substitutes for “live” courses. Board members were pleased and impressed with the processes.
- Continuing Education Policy for 2021 – The Board discussed the need, in light of the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic, to extend the policy of allowing distance learning classes to fulfill all CE requirements.

Dr. Sarkis moved to waive the 6 hour limitation on the number of distance based learning (including on-line) CE courses a licensee may count towards the 2021 calendar year requirement. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “yes”

- Review of Current Regulations, 246 Code of Mass. Regulations – Tabled for discussion at a future meeting

Open Session for topics not reasonably anticipated by the chair within 48 hours of the meeting:

None.

Investigative Conference, Quasi-Judicial Session, Executive Session:

None.

At 11:00 am, Dr. Sarkis moved to adjourn the public meeting. Dr. Sewell seconded. . The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “yes”

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Hawley" clearly distinguishable.

Michael Hawley, Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for October 21, 2020 board meeting
- Draft Minutes of September 16, 2020 board meeting