

Board of Registration of Optometry

Public Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: January 19, 2022 TIME: 10:00am

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Jeanette Sewell, OD

Everett Sabree, OD

Bruce Rakusin, OD

DPL Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Charles Kilb, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Executive Director

Seth Henderson, Board Counsel

Board Members Not Present:

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM by Dr. Sabree

Meeting called to order:

- Teleconference Procedures

Mr. Burke reviewed protocols for meeting via electronic means.

Board Business:

- Review of Public Session Minutes: December 15, 2021 – **Tabled.**

Discussion:

- Glaucoma Certification Course and Applications
 - Glaucoma and Orals Certification Course 2022
 - Registration Deadline for the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (“MSO”) Course

Dr. Wayne Zahka reported that course registration is closed as of the January 16 deadline and the first learning session will begin on January 23, 2022. There are sixty (60) registrants for the second offering of the Glaucoma and Orals Certification course (January 23, 2022 - June 5, 2022). Dr. Zahka noted that the course content is identical to the fall curricula – the clinical component will follow the didactic coursework. Registrants may choose to conduct their own clinical component to meet this requirement. In response to questions from the Board, Dr. Zahka reported that refunds may be available on a case-by-case basis.

- Exemption Eligibility

Members reiterated that the review of out of state applicants who want to be able to treat glaucoma looks to see an equivalent scope of practice, not training, when reviewing out of state applicants. No formal action taken.

- Applications – Update

Mr. Burke reported that Board staff has received and processed 448 applications for glaucoma certification. He expects that certificates and letters will be completed by the end of January and mailed directly to all approved applicants for glaucoma certification. Mr. Burke reminded the Board that optometrists approved for glaucoma certification will not receive a new wallet-sized license card with enhanced Type class. However, glaucoma certification will be visible on the public ePLACE portal and designated on all license certification letters.

- General Guidance

After discussion, the Board reviewed the various exemptions by which Massachusetts optometrists may qualify for glaucoma certification. The Board agreed that applicants seeking exemption by dual licensure must demonstrate an equivalent scope of practice in the state of origin in the management and treatment of glaucoma – as well as continuous and current licensure – but do not need to show equivalent training. Massachusetts licensees who completed a postgraduate residency in ocular disease after June 30, 2011, and optometrists licensed after June 30, 2021 will be exempt from taking the MSO course for glaucoma certification.

- Transcript Evaluation

The Board discussed whether applicants who completed degrees outside of the United States are required to complete an additional year of training to be licensed in Massachusetts. Staff had a specific application from Canada reflecting this issue. After discussion, the Board agreed that applicants who receive a degree from an ACOE (Accreditation Council on Optometric Education) program are eligible for licensure in Massachusetts.

Correspondence:

- COPE Reviewer Status – **Read and filed.**

Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting:

Dr. Zahka questioned how the Board would review new treatments for dry eye via nasal spray and radio wave therapies. The Board discussed the need to evaluate new technologies, and whether the Board should create a framework or guideline for review these treatments to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Board counsel advised that that the Board

should avoid anti-trust issues and consider an update to the Board's regulations. Counsel cautioned that some treatments may be governed by regulations of other trades, professions and stakeholders.

Cases, Investigative Conference, Settlement Offers [Closed session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 §65C]:

At 11:12 a.m., Dr. Sewell moved to enter into Investigative Conference [Closed Session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A § 18D]. Dr. Rakusin seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes.”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes.”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

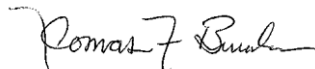
During investigative conference, the Board voted to take the following action:

- 2021-000963-IT-ENF – Closed, no action.

Adjournment:

At 11:39 a.m., Dr. Rakusin moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Sewell seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present.”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for January 19, 2022 board meeting
- Transcript Evaluation
- Correspondence