

Board of Registration of Optometry

Public Session Minutes

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: January 20, 2021 TIME: 10:00am

Board Members Present by Phone/Video:

Everett Sabree, OD

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Bruce Rakusin, OD

Jeanette Sewell, OD

DPL Staff Present by Phone/Video:

Michael Hawley, Executive Director

Jennifer Romeo-Porcaro, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Associate Executive Dir.

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

Meeting called to order:

- Teleconference Procedure

Dr Sabree requested that members and attendants mute the audio component when not speaking. He reminded the Board that every vote requires full name when recording roll call.

Review of minutes:

- October 21, 2020

Dr. Sarkis requested that her name be amended on page two of the October 21, 2020 minutes. Dr. Rakusin moved to approve the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting as amended. 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 – “yes”.

Report from Executive Director:

- MassHealth Participation: Associate Executive Director Burke reported that the majority of Optometry licensees not registered as a billing or non-billing provider with MassHealth resides out of state. He will provide a list of Optometry licensees not in compliance following current renewal period. Non-compliance may affect providers' care of patients.

Legal Update from Board Counsel, Jennifer Romeo-Porcaro:

- No report.

Discussion:

- Emergency policy for reciprocal and reinstated licenses – the Board reviewed changes to proposed policy for improvement of the reinstatement and reciprocal/endorsement licensing processes. **After discussion, Dr. Rakusin moved to approve policy. 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”.**

- Review of Current Regulations, 246 Code Mass. Regs – the Board instructed Counsel to report on changes to distance learning requirements and report to the Board at a future meeting.
- Implementation of addition of Glaucoma treatment to the Optometrist scope of practice – legislation signed on January 1, 2021 to permit Massachusetts Optometrists to provide treatment of glaucoma. The Board discussed criteria for certification –both clinical and didactic training – and expressed an interest in working with the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) on content and regulatory process. Attorney Romeo-Porcaro proposed a meeting to discuss the following topics on February 17, 2021 at 10:00 am: reciprocity, educational components, residency and implantation.

Dr. Sarkis left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

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

- The Board instructed staff to review past minutes for decision regarding use of steroid creams for the treatment of dry eye. Board staff will report findings to the Board at subsequent meeting.

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

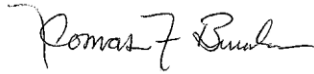
At 11:20 a.m., Dr. Rakusin moved to suspend the open meeting and enter into closed session to conduct investigatory conferences, pursuant to G.L. c. 112, §65C. Dr. Willinger seconded the motion. Motion passed by a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “yes”

During the closed session, the Board took the following actions:

- Response from Boston Teacher’s Union Eyecare re: use of non-licensed employees: Tabled.
- 2020-001054-it-enf – Refer to Investigations.

At 12:00 p.m., Dr. Rakusin moved to exit closed session and to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote by all members present: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Rakusin – “yes” Dr. Sewell – “yes”

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Burke, Associate Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for January 20, 2021 board meeting
- Draft Minutes of October 21, 2020 board meeting