

## **Board of Registration of Optometry**

### **Public Session Minutes**

Meeting Held by Phone/Video Conference

DATE: March 20, 2024 TIME: 10:00am

**A public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Optometry (“the Board”) was held via Videoconference and Conference Call pursuant to section 40 of chapter 2 of the acts of 2023, signed into law on March 29, 2023.**

#### **Board Members Present by Phone/Video:**

Rhonda Willinger, OD

Everett Sabree, OD

Jeanette Sewell, OD

#### **DPH Staff Present by Phone/Video:**

Sheila York, Board Counsel

Jaqueline Petrillo, Board Counsel

Thomas F. Burke, Executive Director

Lauren McShane, Chief Investigator

Margaret McKenna, Board Staff

Christian Carl, Intern

#### **Board Members Not Present by Phone/Video:**

Marianne Sarkis, Ph.D.

Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM by Dr. Sabree

#### **Meeting called to order:**

- Teleconference Procedures

Mr. Burke advised members of the public to turn off the video/audio feature and utilize the raised hand function to address the Board.

- Roll Call Vote for Attendance

Board chair Dr. Sabree established a quorum via calling attendance: Everett Sabree, Jeanette Sewell and Rhonda Willinger. All members participated remotely via Webex by Cisco.

#### **Board Business:**

- Ms. York introduced Attorney Jacqueline Petrillo, who will serve as incoming board counsel for future meetings. The Board welcomed Ms. Petrillo and offered their gratitude to Ms. York for her many years of work as board counsel.

- Review of Public Session Minutes: January 17, 2024

**Dr. Sewell moved to accept the public session minutes as written. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.**

## **Discussion:**

- Glaucoma certification course offering

The Board reviewed a proposal from Dr. Wayne Zahka, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO), to offer future glaucoma and orals certification education in an asynchronous format allowing candidates to enroll at a time of their choosing. He explained that, upon enrollment, candidates would have four months to complete the didactic modules and six weeks to finish the clinical modules with competency test questions at the conclusion of each module without a final exam. MSO would follow protocol set by the National Board of Examiners in Optometry to allow candidates the opportunity to retake module exams up to six times. Questions raised in past course offerings by optometrists will be added to future curricula for new candidates as a learning resource. The Board noted that by removing the final exam requirement there would be no cumulative assessment as was previously approved by the Board. In response, MSO will include a proctored final exam assessment in all future course offerings. After two years, the course curriculum may be revised to include new knowledge-based source material in the field of glaucoma education. The executive director reported that there are several TPA certified optometrists in Massachusetts who may seek to enroll in future glaucoma certification courses. MSO will provide a revised course proposal with specific course dates for board review at a subsequent meeting.

- 246CMR 1.00 Purposes and Definitions and 246CMR 2.00 Examination and Licensure - Review

Board counsel Sheila York led the Board in a review of 246 CMR to discuss proposed changes to codify current policy on glaucoma certification in optometry regulations. The Board agreed with counsel that review should begin with 246 CMR 1.00. The Board advised that an additional definition should be added to 246 CMR 1.00 to clarify the different uses of therapeutic pharmaceutical agents in the treatment of glaucoma restricting the use of opioids. The Board also discussed the need to provide a definition of distance-based learning to the regulations as it relates to glaucoma training and the use of Council on Optometric Practitioner Education (COPE) approved synchronous and asynchronous courses in continuing education requirements. The Board recommended that revisions to continuing education requirements follow the COPE standards set by the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO). The director suggested the Board include board-approved entities as part of the regulation revisions. Finally, the Board reviewed continuing education and clinical exam requirements for optometrists seeking to reactivate their licenses. The Board advised that the number of continuing education course hours be capped at five years for optometrists seeking to come back into practice. Optometrists who have been expired for more than five years and not actively practicing in another jurisdiction should take a clinical

proficiency examination. Ms. York thanked the Board for their contributions and encouraged members to send additional questions or concerns on the regulations to Mr. Burke.

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

**Cases, Investigative Conference, Settlement Offers [Closed session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112 §65C]: Investigative Matters and Settlement Offers- [Closed Session Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 112, § 65C]:**

**At 11:31 a.m. Dr. Sewell motioned to adjourn the public meeting and enter into closed session to conduct investigatory conferences pursuant to G.L. c. 112, §65C, and at the conclusion of the closed session, not return to the public meeting. Dr. Sabree seconded. Motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.**

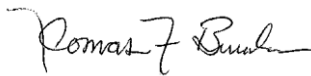
During the closed session, the Board took the following action:

- FINV6781 – Dismissed with advisory letter.
- INV7226 – Dismissed.
- INV7255 – Dismissed with advisory letter.
- INV9277 – Closed, no action.

**Adjournment:**

**At 12:55 p.m., Dr. Sewell moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Willinger seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote: Dr. Willinger – “yes”; Dr. Sabree – “yes”; Dr. Sarkis – “Not Present”; Dr. Sewell – “yes”.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Thomas Burke, Executive Director

Documents used in the open meeting:

- Agenda for March 20, 2024 board meeting
- Public session minutes for January 17, 2024
- Letter from the Massachusetts Society of Optometrists (MSO) on future glaucoma and orals certification education
- Interpretation CE Requirements for Massachusetts Optometrists
- 246 CMR 1.00 & 2.00
- Senate Bill 2984 containing M.G.L. c. 112, § 66C

- Policy on Topical and Oral Therapeutic Pharmaceutical Agents and Glaucoma Certification (TPA+GC)