

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SPECIAL COMMISSION ON ORAL HEALTH MEETING
WORKFORCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Friday, February 7, 2025
Via Microsoft Teams
11:00 AM
General (Open Session) Meeting Minutes

Commission Members

Present: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Marcy Foreman
4. Catherine Hayes
5. Emma Lawson
6. Barbara Young
7. Nithya Ramesh

Commission Members

Not Present: 3

1. Alec Eidelman
2. Michelle Henshaw
3. Catherine Nwachukwu

Staff Present:

1. Matthew Horan

I. Welcome

II. Call to Order | Determination of Quorum

Time and call to order (11:02 AM by Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed)

#Present: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Marcy Foreman
4. Catherine Hayes
5. Emma Lawson
6. Barbara Young
7. Nithya Ramesh

Absent: 3

1. Alec Eidelman
2. Michelle Henshaw
3. Catherine Nwachukwu

Recused: 0

Abstained: 0

III. Approval of Agenda

DISCUSSION

Review the posted agenda, no changes

ACTION

Motion by Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed to approve the agenda, seconded by Barbara Young, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote as follows:

#Approve: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Marcy Foreman
4. Catherine Hayes
5. Emma Lawson
6. Barbara Young
7. Nithya Ramesh

Absent: 3

1. Alec Eidelman
2. Michelle Henshaw
3. Catherine Nwachukwu

#Recused: 0

#Abstained: 0

IV. Approval of Minutes

DISCUSSION

Review the meeting minutes from February 4, 2025.

ACTION

Motion by Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed to approve the agenda, seconded by Barbara Young, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote as follows:

#Approve: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Marcy Foreman
4. Catherine Hayes
5. Emma Lawson
6. Barbara Young
7. Nithya Ramesh

Absent: 3

1. Alec Eidelman
2. Michelle Henshaw
3. Catherine Nwachukwu

#Recused: 0

#Abstained: 0

V. Work on the Plan for Developing an Oral Health Needs Assessment

DISCUSSION

- The group reviewed the need to complete their data worksheets. They are planning to submit individual responses to Angela Verheyen by February 13, 2025
- Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed has reviewed all the previous meeting minutes for this subcommittee and started a summary list of policy recommendations, shared on screen and to be shared with the meeting minutes entitled “DR ABE ABDUL SCOH FINAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.docx”
- The group reviewed the shared document together and made live edits
 - Dental Workforce Investment Act with funding to be managed via the Office of Oral Health (OOH) at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health was recommended and discussed
 - Various loan repayment options and startup grants were discussed
 - Using dental student residents was discussed for field experience
 - Outreach from dental schools for new hygienists and dental assistants discussed with funding to OOH to develop and manage outreach programs to Massachusetts schools
 - Public health dental hygienists were highlighted as doing many of the community health fairs already and being ideal potential partners for the work
 - Expanding community health center outreach using a dental resident stipend pathway was discussed
 - Permit M (mobile) time processing was discussed – a suggestion for a 60-day maximum processing time was discussed.
 - Mobile dental office as a “dentistry on wheels” type of operation was reviewed but only a few exist in Massachusetts due to the costs of operating.

- Portable dental operations are more “dentistry in a bag” operations that are common amongst public health dental hygienists. The Board of Registration in Dentistry (BORID) only has 6 dental investigators, so they have been allowing the applicants to send photographs during the application process to demonstrate compliance with requirements. One challenge has been dental instrument transport and processing around sterilization needs.
- Reviewed dental therapist concept broadly – discussed its inclusion within the workforce, expansion of hygiene scope (mid-level provider) to help provide more access, public health dental hygienists example discussed as being able to provide additional services.
 - The need to recommend consideration for the expansion of hygiene education programs to include restorative treatment/care as a means to increase access was emphasized
 - Debate over hygiene privileges versus demand for the workforce
- Dental assistants – on-the-job pathway was discussed including why the need to restrict anyone with previous dental experience was reviewed. It was highlighted that this pathway is an exception. A front desk staff can use the letter of intent for up to six months as long as they have no clinical dental experience in Massachusetts or anywhere else.
- Current statutes in the rule-making period were reviewed:
 - Diversion – Unified Recovery and Monitory Program (URAMP) program now active: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/unified-recovery-and-monitoring-program>
 - Dental practice details are under review currently for some challenges around what monitoring might look like within the profession
 - Internationally trained dentists to earn a hygiene license
 - A workgroup is formed from BORID containing 5 members.
 - limited licensure application process is already available, hygiene licensure application is already available, merging them and creating that new process within the new software system is the challenge
 - Also changing the regulations will take time
- administrative actions were reviewed
 - the need for a database of dentists that are willing to serve as a collaborative dentist for public health dental hygienists is emphasized
 - Modifying the licensure renewal survey is recommended with management via the OOH
- Collaborations – workforce taskforce recommended
- Data requests and long-term tracking over time are recommended outside of the Commission’s one-time reporting work. Total full-time equivalents (FTEs) by provider type and practice location are discussed.

- Limited licensees renew their licenses for 5 years currently, a suggestion for passing the competency exam to become a full licensee for year 6 and beyond without requiring advanced standing pathways was shared.
 - A similar pathway was suggested for specialty program graduates
 - BORID doesn't issue specialty licenses in Massachusetts currently
- For the February 27, 2025 Commission meeting, the group selected Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed to present with Hassam Batel as the secondary back-up presenter.

V. Adjourn

DISCUSSION

None.

ACTION

Motion by Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Barbara Young, and unanimously approved by roll call vote as follows:

#Approve: 7

1. Chair: Abdullaibrahim Abdulwaheed
2. Hussam Batal
3. Marcy Foreman
4. Catherine Hayes
5. Emma Lawson
6. Barbara Young
7. Nithya Ramesh

Absent: 3

1. Alec Eidelman
2. Michelle Henshaw
3. Catherine Nwachukwu

#Recused: 0

#Abstained: 0

Let the record show the meeting adjourned at 12:29 PM.