

Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Meeting Held by Video Conference and Phone
DATE: May 1, 2023 TIME: 9:00 a.m.

Public Session Minutes

A public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (“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 video or phone:

Nicole Laffan
Sarah Young-Hong
Gabrielle Simone
Donna Noonan
Kristin Bresnahan

Staff Present by video or phone:

James G. Lavery, Director of BHPL
Thomas Burke, Executive Director
Sheila York, Board Counsel
Monique Brown, Board Staff

Board Members Not Present by video or phone:

Housekeeping

- Meeting Called to Order at 9:06 am. Board chair called meeting to order.
- Roll Call Vote for Attendance
Board chair, Nicole Laffan, established a quorum via calling attendance: Nicole Laffan, Gabrielle Simone, Sarah Young-Hong, and Donna Noonan. Kristin Bresnahan was not present. All members present participated remotely via Cisco Webex.

Mr. Burke advised members of the public to disable the audio and video features unless they are addressing the Board. They were encouraged utilize the hand function to address the Board.

- Introductions – James G. Lavery, Director of Bureau of Health Professions Licensure
Director Lavery met with Board members to welcome them to the Bureau of Health Professions Licensure at the Department of Public Health. He expressed gratitude for the Board’s work and offered support in the implementation of provisional licensure.

Dr. Bresnahan joined the meeting at 9:13 a.m.

Board Business

- Approve Public Session Minutes
 - Minutes of 4/3/23 meeting
The Board reviewed the draft of the public session minutes of the April 3, 2023 Board meeting. **Dr. Laffan moved to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. Simone seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “Yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “Yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “Abstain”; Dr. Simone – “Yes”; Ms. Noonan – “Abstain.”**
- Report from Executive Director, Thomas Burke
No report.
- Report from Board Counsel
No report.

Discussion

- **Update on Proposed Regulation Changes for Provisional Licensure**

Ms. York reported that she continues to work on the regulation changes to include provisional licensure. She indicated the process will require submission of additional forms and increased resources. She noted that after submission, a public hearing will be scheduled. She advised the Board that it is reasonable to use the current licensing fee for provisional licensure for speech-language pathologists who would upgrade to full licensure with no additional fee. The single fee would obviate the need for changes to the Administration and Finance regulation, CMR 8.01 4.00, and expedite submission process. The Board opined that the lack of provisional licensure contributes to the attrition of qualified speech-language pathologists in Massachusetts and prevents clinical fellows from working in medical facilities that require providers to have a license and NPI number. The Board noted that the Massachusetts Speech-Language Hearing Association (MSHA) has endorsed provisional licensure for speech-language pathologists. Director Lavery stated that he will work with his staff to bring this matter to the Commissioner's office and Mr. Burke offered to expedite the licensing process for clinical fellows until provisional licensure is in place.

- **Scope of Practice (question from K. Gamble on diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder by Speech-Language Pathologists)**

The Board reviewed a question on whether Massachusetts speech-language pathologists (SLPs) may diagnose autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The Board chair noted that speech-language pathologists who receive appropriate clinical training and possess relevant experience in diagnosing developmental disorders may qualify to independently diagnose ASD. She pointed out, however, that SLPs should work collaboratively with other medical professionals, such as developmental pediatricians and psychologists, to ensure that a plan of care may be implemented for treatment. The Board chair reported that guidance for the diagnosis of individuals with ASD may be found in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) standards that permit the SLP to work as part of an interdisciplinary team in the provision of services and treatment. She noted that individuals trained as board certified behavior analysts (BCBA) cannot diagnose ASD. Finally, the Board chair, in response to a question from Dr. Gamble, stated that collaboration with other professionals includes review of full patient case history, discussion with other professionals involved to fill in missing diagnostic information, and proper use of screening tools. Dr. Roger Cohen, clinical neuropsychologist, expressed concern about SLPs diagnosing ASD based on Massachusetts General Law. Ms. York requested that Dr. Cohen submit his concerns in writing. Further, Ms. York stated that members of the public who have concerns regarding the role of the SLP in the diagnosing of ASD may submit a complaint to the Board.

- **SLPRA100021/SLP5986 (MF)**

- **SLPRA100049/SLP3919 (ML)**

The Executive Director submitted the above-referenced items for Board guidance on processing late renewal applications. After discussion, and on the advice of Counsel, the Board instructed the Director and his staff to direct licensees who

attempt to renew their licenses within 90 days after the date of expiration to submit a renewal application with assessed late fee (per MGL chapter 112, sec 65). Licensees who attempt to renew their licenses beyond 90 days shall submit a license reactivation application.

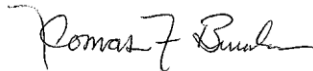
Open session for topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting:

None.

Settlement Offers, Cases – Investigative Conference [Closed session pursuant to G.L. c. 112, §65C]: None

At 9:58 a.m., Dr. Laffan moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young-Hong seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “Yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “Yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “Yes”; Dr. Simone – “Yes”; Ms. Noonan – “Yes.”

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas F. Burke
Executive Director

Documents Used in the Open Meeting:

- Agenda
- Public Session Minutes of 4/3/2023 Board meeting
- Question from KG regarding scope of practice in diagnosing autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Renewal applications for MF (protected personal data redacted).
- Renewal Application for ML (protected personal data redacted).