



**TENNESSEE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS'
COMMITTEE ON PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS
Regular Board Meeting**

Friday, February 2nd, 2018

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Hux OPA-C
Greg Cain PA-C
Barbara Thornton, Consumer Member
Donna Lynch PA-C

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Bret Reeves PA-C
Ralph Dailey PA-C
Omar Nava PA-C

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Rene Saunders, MD, Medical Consultant
Maegan Carr Martin, JD, Executive Director
Andrea Huddleston, JD, Deputy General Counsel
Candyce Waszmer, Administrative Director
Steven Delk, Board Administrator

The meeting was called to order by Committee Secretary, Mr. Benjamin Hux.

MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the October 2017 meeting, which was the last time this Committee met. The Committee was scheduled to meet on January 12th; however state offices were closed on that day due to inclement weather. Ms. Barbara Thornton made a motion to approve the minutes contingent upon the correction of a minor error. The motion was seconded by Ms. Donna Lynch. The motion to approve these minutes passed unanimously.

APPLICANT INTERVIEWS

Gamal Alshobari, OPA – Mr. Alshobari attended the meeting via teleconference. Mr. Alshobari was invited to attend the meeting because he has not completed a board-approved OPA training program. Ms. Andrea Huddleston brought to the attention of the Committee that he had attended medical school but had not attended an OPA program. Mr. Hux asked Mr. Alshobari to explain why he is applying for an OPA license and not an MD license, since he attended medical school and worked in Egypt as an orthopedic surgeon. Mr. Alshobari explained that he had 37 years of experience as an orthopedic surgeon and had also worked in Richmond, Virginia as an OPA. He is qualified to sit for the USMLE but could not easily get a residency slot in orthopedics and did not want to lose his employment as an OPA.

John Williams, representative from the Tennessee Association of Physician Assistants (TAPA) was permitted to address the Committee and stated that he had concerns, not about whether Mr. Alshobari is academically qualified, but whether he would be a good fit for the specific position for which he is applying. Ms. Huddleston reminded the Committee that their task was to determine whether Mr. Alshobari was qualified for licensure, and explained that the Committee could request that Mr. Alshobari get more training, they could approve his license, or deny his application. Ms. Lynch made a motion to deny this application and Mr. Gregory Cain seconded. Mr. Alshobari was given the opportunity to withdraw his application and he did not withdraw. The Committee voted unanimously to deny Mr. Gamal Alshobari's application. There was some discussion regarding whether the denial would be reported to the National Practitioner Databank (NPDB) and it was determined that the denial would not be reported because it was based solely on the Committee's determination that Mr. Alshobari doesn't qualify.

Terence Netzel, PA – Mr. Netzel attended the meeting via teleconference. Mr. Netzel was invited to appear before the Committee because he was convicted of driving under the influence (DUI) in 2013. Mr. Netzel's supervising physician appeared telephonically as well. Mr. Hux asked Mr. Netzel to explain the circumstances giving rise to his arrest. After hearing from Mr. Netzel, Ms. Thornton made a motion to grant Mr. Netzel licensure and Ms. Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Stacy Wegner, PA – Ms. Wegner attended the meeting via teleconference. Ms. Wegner was invited to attend the meeting because she has been out of clinical practice since 2012. Ms. Lynch explained the Committee's reentry policy. Mr. Hux asked Ms. Wegner if she has identified a supervising physician that would be willing to supervise her while she completes the reentry process. She explained that she had a group she could work with for her "rotation". Mr. Hux made a motion to approve Ms. Wegner's application contingent upon her submission to an evaluation by a PLAS collaborator. If the evaluation reveals that Ms. Wegner is ready to return to practice, her license will be issued. If the evaluation identifies clinical deficiencies, she will be required to remediate those deficiencies before her license will be issued. Ms. Wegner must submit the results of her evaluation to Dr. Rene Saunders, medical consultant for the Board of Medical Examiners, who will help her through the remediation process. Mr. Cain seconded the motion. Dr. Saunders recommended that the application be tabled until October 2018 to allow Ms. Wegner ample time to submit to the evaluation. The Committee agreed. Mr. Hux called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Shelton Brewer, PA – Mr. Brewer appeared before the Committee to explain the circumstances surrounding his arrest for driving under the influence (DUI) in 2013. Mr. Brewer gave a summary of the events which led to his arrest and confirmed that he has met with TnPAP. Mr. Hux asked whether this incident was a one-time occurrence. Mr. Brewer confirmed that it was. After some deliberation, Ms.

Lynch motioned to approve the application for licensure, contingent on Mr. Brewer presenting proof to the administrative office that he has been evaluated by TnPAP. This motion was seconded by Mr. Cain and passed unanimously.

Michele Potter, PA – Ms. Potter first appeared before the Committee in 2016 to address her absence from clinical practice since 1993. Since that time, Ms. Potter has submitted to an evaluation by a PLAS collaborator and has been working with Dr. Saunders to remediate the clinical deficiencies identified in that evaluation. She last appeared before the Committee in January 2017. Dr. Saunders confirmed that Ms. Potter has done everything the Committee has asked of her and that she is entitled to have her license approved. Ms. Lynch made a motion to reinstate the license and Ms. Thornton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Barbara Steplock, PA – Ms. Steplock appeared before the Committee to address the circumstances surrounding her arrest for driving under the influence (DUI) in May 2012. Ms. Steplock confirmed that she has met with and been evaluated by TnPAP. Mr. Cain motioned to approve licensure contingent upon the administrative office's receipt of her TNPAP evaluation and resulting recommendations. Ms. Thornton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ratification of PA Licenses

Mr. Hux motioned to ratify the new and reinstated licenses. Ms. Lynch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Criminal Conviction Policy

Ms. Huddleston presented a draft policy that would allow applicants with misdemeanors older than five (5) years to be licensed without coming before the Committee for an interview. Mr. Cain motioned to adopt the reentry policy and Ms. Thornton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Reentry Policy

Ms. Maegan Martin referred the Committee to its reentry policy that was adopted in a previous meeting but has not yet been approved by the Board of Medical Examiners. Because of the delay in having the Board consider the policy, Ms. Martin brought the policy back to the Committee for reaffirmation before the policy will go to the BME for consideration and ratification.

Mr. Cain had some concerns regarding the rigidity of the policy. In essence, he wanted the Committee to resume consideration of the policy because he was not sure that someone who has been out of practice for around two years should be required to submit to an evaluation. Ms. Martin and Ms. Thornton provided some detail about discussions the Committee had had in previous meetings. Ms. Martin acknowledged that the Committee did struggle somewhat with the issues Mr. Cain raised. A motion was made by Mr. Cain to table this discussion until the next meeting when more members of the Committee will be present. Ms. Thornton seconded the motion. A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

Financial Report

Ms. Noranda French presented the Committee with its official 2017 fiscal year-end report. Ms. French outlined the Committee's growth in licensure numbers. The number of licensed physician assistants has increased, but the number of OPAs has declined slightly. Ms. French referenced the Health Related Boards (HRB) policy that specifies when a fee decrease should be considered. According to that policy, if a board, committee or council's financial report reveals that its cumulative carryover balance for two

consecutive years is twice the amount of the three year average of the annual operational expenditures, that board, committee or council should consider a reduction in fees. The Committee last authorized a reduction in its fees in 2016; accordingly, no fee reductions will be considered at this time despite the fact that this Committee meets the requirements.

Consent Orders

No consent orders were presented.

Managers' Report

Ms. Martin referred the Committee to the statistical licensure information and reported there is a steady increase in applicants and total number of licensees. There were, as of the date of the report, two thousand two hundred and fifteen (2,215) licensed physician assistants in Tennessee and eighteen (18) orthopedic physician assistants. Thirty-three (33) new applications were received since the last Committee meeting; including one (1) OPA application.

Legislation

Andrea Huddleston provided an overview of legislation pending this session that is likely to be of interest to the Committee.

Senate Bill 1515 /House Bill 2239

This bill would amend the language used to define the relationship between physicians and their supervisee physician assistants from "supervising physician" to "collaborating physician".

Senate Bill: 1926 /House Bill: 2122

This bill would create a new licensure category for doctors of medical science. PAs with three years of experience in primary care would be eligible for licensure as a doctor of medical science after completing a qualifying DMS program. Currently, the only program is offered through LMU. Doctors of medical science would not work under the supervision of a physician, but autonomously in primary care.

FSMB April Meeting

Ms. Martin discussed the upcoming Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) meeting in April, and asked the Committee members if they would like to authorize sending one or more representatives. Ms. Thornton has attended in the past and stated that she found the meeting to be very beneficial. Ms. Thornton made a motion that two (2) staff members and one (1) board member be approved to attend the meeting in April. Mr. Cain seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Office of Investigations

There were three (3) new complaints opened this year and zero (0) cases have been closed. Forty (40) cases are open in total. Zero (0) complaints have been opened this year against OPAs and zero (0) have been closed. One (1) open case in total.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned.