

Board of Registration for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology
Meeting Held by Video Conference and Phone
DATE: September 1, 2020 TIME: 9:30 a.m.

Public Session Minutes

An public meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology (“the Board”) was held via Videoconference and Conference Call due to the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20.

Board Members Present by video or phone:

Nicole Laffan
Kristin Bresnahan
Sarah Young-Hong
Donna Noonan

Staff Present by video or phone:

Michael Hawley, Executive Director
Lynn Read, Board Counsel

Meeting called to order at 9:54

Board Business:

- Approve Minutes
 - Minutes of 6/2/2020 meeting, public session

Having reviewed the above minutes, Dr. Bresnahan moved to approve the minutes of the 6/2/2020 public meeting as written. Ms. Noonan seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “Yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “Yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “Yes” and Ms. Noonan – “Yes”.

- Minutes of 6/10/2020 meeting, public session

Having reviewed the above minutes, Dr. Bresnahan moved to approve the minutes of the 6/2/2020 public meeting as written. Ms. Noonan seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “Yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “Yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “Yes” and Ms. Noonan – “Yes”.

- Report from Executive Director, Michael Hawley
 - Mr. Hawley reported that Board staff have been busier than usual at this time of year due to the increase in telepractice related inquiries as well as increased complexity in handling application related documentation now being submitted electronically as well as via postal mail.

- Report from Board Counsel, Lynn Read
 - Ms. Read indicated that all of her discussion points related to discussion topics listed later in the agenda.

Compliance Monitoring.

- F.M. The Board received required documents associated with the consent agreement for case number 2019-000634-IT-ENF.
After discussion, Ms. Noonan moved to accept the reports. Dr. Laffan seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Ms. Noonan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”

Discussion

- Covid-19 related issues:
 - *Order Ending Extension of Renewals for Licenses Expiring On and After July 11, 2020* – Mr. Hawley reported that this executive order required that licenses with expiration dates between March 10 and July 11, 2020 must be renewed by October 1, 2020. Licenses with expiration dates after July 11 are required to renew on time. Board staff is renewing the renewal database daily to make sure that renewals are processed in a timely manner.
 - *Telepractice and phased reopening* – The Board discussed concerns that patients requiring the fitting of hearing aids may have audiograms that were performed more than 6 months ago and thus would be required to obtain a new audiogram. However, since audiograms must be performed in person and many individuals in need of hearing aids fall into high risk categories with respect to COVID-19, those individuals may be unable to obtain a new audiogram.
After discussion, Ms. Noonan moved to extend the requirement from 6 months to 1 year; but recommending that the audiogram be performed as soon as possible. Ms. Young-Hong seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Ms. Noonan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”
 - *Concerns regarding telepractice guidelines and the provision of services to students, pursuant to IEPs* – The Board reviewed a document created by Mass. Advocates for Children. The document detailed concerns with the Board’s telepractice policy as it impacts services provided to students under Individual Education Plans or IEPs. These concerns related to the feasibility of in-person evaluations, obtaining informed consent and other topics. The Board agreed that tele-therapy provided pursuant to an IEP could remain in effect until the next annual IEP meeting. The Board also clarified that the amended temporary policy allowance of 90 days after the termination of the state of emergency for an in person evaluation meant 90 business days and that the policy should be amended to so indicate. The Board also considered a question submitted by an SLP who wished to know whether an SLP who conducted an evaluation remotely for a client to whom services were provided by another licensee would be required to conduct an in-person evaluation with that client after the lifting of the state of emergency. The Board indicated that the evaluator would not be required to provide the evaluation.

After discussion, Ms. Noonan moved to delegate to Board counsel, in consultation with Dr. Laffan, the task of revising the temporary policy consistent with the forgoing discussion. Ms. Young-Hong seconded. The motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Ms. Noonan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”

- Telepractice policy review: Tabled.
- Review current regulations for potential changes: Tabled.

Motion to adjourn. At 10:30, Ms. Noonan moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Young-Hong seconded. Motion passed on a roll call vote: Dr. Laffan – “yes”; Dr. Bresnahan – “yes”; Ms. Young-Hong – “yes”

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Hawley
Executive Director

Documents Used in the Open Meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes of 6/2/2020 board meeting
- Minutes of 6/10/2020 board meeting
- Inquiry regarding audiogram, email addressed to Board of Hearing Instrument Specialists, dated 7/29/2020
- Concerns to Address with SLP Licensure Board to Provide Access to IEP Speech Teletherapy from Mass. Advocates for Children, dated July 8, 2020
- SP Final Updated 6.10.2020 SP Board Guidance-Telepractice etc.