

MARYLAND BOARD OF ACUPUNCTURE

4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION

MAY 11, 2021
1:00 p.m.
GOOGLE MEET

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brandie Armijo, L.Ac., LPN, BSN, DACM, Chair, Sherrie Black, L.Ac., RN, Esq., Vice Chair, Sheryl Hongsermeier, L.Ac., RN, Thomas Ingegno, L.Ac., DACM, Peter Marinakis, L.Ac., Ph.D., Barbara Huston, Consumer, Bonnie Miranda, Consumer

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

BOARD STAFF PRESENT:

Penny Heisler, Executive Director, Cynthia Dobbins, Administrative Officer, and David Finkler, AAG

VISITORS:

Lillian Reese, Boards and Commission Legislative Coordinator, Lynn Vance, MAS, Sharon Jennings Rojas, MUIH, Hunter Thomas, MUIH, Kerri Westhauser, MUIH, and Janet Padgett, MUIH

CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Dr. Armijo called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM

APPROVAL OF MARCH 9, 2021 MINUTES

Ms. Black moved to approve the Minutes as written and Dr. Ingegno seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

1. OLD BUSINESS

A. COMAR 10.26.02

Ms. Heisler reached out to the MDH Secretary's Office to inquire about the status of the Board's proposed regulations. She was told that the Office is having its first monthly Secretary's Regulation Meeting in mid-May. The first meeting will focus on moving forward all of the finals and telehealth proposals. During the June meeting, the Secretary will focus on moving forward on the remaining proposals such as COMAR 10.26.02.

2. NEW BUSINESS

A. NCCAOM Requirement

Dr. Armijo stated that the Board should consider moving forward with the rest of the country and require the NCCAOM exam for initial acupuncture licensure in Maryland. She believes that all licensees should be tested to prove competency in their acupuncture knowledge and performance. Out of the 47 states, plus the District of Columbia, Maryland is the only state that does not require an exam to attain acupuncture licensure. She said that states should be standardized and unified in their licensure requirements to enable reciprocity. Ms. Black stated that if the Board decides to move forward with the exam she would recommend adding a grandfathering clause for current licensees.

Ms. Heisler said that she received an email from Marc Levin, President and CEO of the Maryland University of Integrative Health, stating that MUIH would oppose the implementation of a requirement mandating the NCCAOM exam in Maryland. He believes graduating from an ACAOM approved school is sufficient evidence of professional readiness and the exam does not necessarily address all the appropriate skills and knowledge that is taught at an approved school. The University believes that the exam tends to be heavily weighted toward one particular approach to acupuncture.

Sharon Jennings Rojas said that she agreed with Mr. Levin and asked if the Board were to consider changing its law, that a grandfathering clause should be added. She stated that MUIH has broadened its teachings to include East Asian medicine. She recommended that the Board provide sufficient time to allow the University to transition its curriculum to support student success on the exam.

Denise Tyson, President of the Maryland Acupuncture Society wrote to the Board to state that the acupuncture profession has evolved into a recognized body of medicine across the country and believes that Maryland should conform to the national mandatory certification standards. She believes that the NCCAOM certification will allow Maryland acupuncturists to have flexibility for practicing in other neighboring states, government agencies and hospitals which require professional certification.

After a lengthy discussion, Dr. Ingegno moved change its statute to mandate the NCCAOM exam as a basis for initial licensure and Dr. Marinakis seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

B. Out Standing Renewals

Ms. Heisler stated that the Board is currently processing renewals for the May 2021 cycle. She stated this is the third renewal processed during the COVID State of Emergency. She stated that Governor Hogan issued a new Order on March 9, 2021, modifying the previous Order that extended licenses, permits, and certifications. According to the March 9th Order, the temporary extension of licenses, permits, and certifications as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will now end on June 30, 2021. She has sent out several emails to all licensees to alert them of this change and has also posted the information on the Board's website.

She stated that as of today, there are 296 renewals outstanding. She believes that most licensees will renew before the June 30 deadline to avoid the hefty penalty of reinstatement.

C. Executive Director Update

Ms. Heisler stated that this may be Dr. Ingegno's last meeting. He has served 8 years on the Board and a new appointment should be made in July. Dr. Ingegno took on the role as Chair and served on the regulatory, legislative and disciplinary committees and was instrumental in expanding the Board's scope. She and the Board members thanked him for his service. Dr. Ingegno said it was his pleasure serving on the Board was happy that he was able to be a part of the legislation that broadened the scope of acupuncturists to practice East Asian medicine.

Dr. Marinakis moved to close the meeting at 1:55 PM to go into Administrative Session in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act § 3-305(b)(2) "To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business" and Ms. Miranda seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion.