

The regular session meeting of the Board of Examiners for Audiologists, Hearing Aid Dispensers and Speech-Language Pathologists was held on January 21, 2021, via teleconference. The regular Session Board meeting came to order at 4:15 p.m.

#### **Staff Present**

Candace G. Robinson, Executive Director  
Oluremi Dean, Discipline & Compliance Officer  
Bethan Haaga, AAG Board Counsel  
Zoann Mouzone, Administrative Specialist III  
Monica Wright, Office Secretary III  
Lillian Reese, Legasrtative Coordinator

#### **Present Members**

Dr. Jennifer Mertes, Chair  
Dr. Stacey Samuel-Cole, Vice-Chair  
Mr. John Rouse, CON  
Mr. James Sciabarrasi, HAD  
Dr. Barbara McLendon, AUD  
Ms. Ellen Stein, CON  
Ms. Carolyn Stine, SLP  
Ms. Jill Silverman, SLP  
Dr. Carrie Nieman, MD  
Dr. Tam Nguyen, MD  
Mr. Kim Keller, HAD (HAD practicals)  
Mr. Richard Brisbane, HAD (HAD practicals)

#### **Visitors**

NONE

#### **Approval for Open Session**

Dr. Tam Nguyen made a motion to begin the open session. Mr. James Sciabarrasi seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### **Agenda Review and Approval for November 19, 2020**

Ms. Carolyn Stine made a motion to approve the agenda with amendments to HB25 and final audit report. Dr. Tam Nguyen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### **Minutes Review and Approval for November 19, 2020, January 6, 2021 and January 14, 2021**

Dr. Tam Nguyen made a motion to approve minutes. Mr. John Rouse seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

#### **Regulatory Review**

Dr. Robinson reported that items from the recent emergency board meetings that were voted on such as letters of support, letters of concerns and letters of support with amendments, have been completed. Dr. Robinson also stated that she testified for the Music Therapy bill and will be testifying next week again on it as well as the compact bill. Dr. Robinson also stated that she will be sending out letters on Monday for HB161 (Audiology Assistants bill) and SB72 (Maryland Transparency Act of 2021). SB72 requires that open Board meetings are live streamed and require the unedited recordings to be posted on our website, in addition to putting all agenda materials on the website 48 hours before an open meeting, with the exception of an emergency session. Dr. Robinson shared that other boards also had concerns about the potential use of recordings on social media and the added administrative and fiscal impact of this bill. Ms. Ellen Stein made motion to have Dr. Robinson write a letter of concern and to allow the other Boards to join in doing so. Mr. John Rouse seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. Dr. Robinson stated that she will be sending out letters on Monday for HB161 and SB72. For HB25 (Maryland Health Care Heroes Protection Act), Dr. Barbara McClendon made a motion to not take any position. Ms. Ellen Stein seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Robinson also asked for the status of the Hearing Aid Dispenser Working Group regarding the entry level for Maryland practitioners; there were no updates at this time.

## **Board Counsel Report**

**NONE**

### **Executive Director's Report - - Dr. Candace G. Robinson**

Legislative Audit – For the audit period of September 2015-September 2019, the Board was implicated in improper separation of duties due to too many people having access to part of the licensure database during that time period, reconciliation of credit card revenue against daily state reports not being completed, reports of licenses issued to cash receipts not being reported and not having a lock box for payments to be received into. Dr. Robinson joined the Board in November and was never advised of these things needing to be done, nor had they been done during the four years of the audit that took place under a different Executive Director. Since then, we have been able to separate the access appropriately in the licensing database. Dr. Robinson reconciles the credit card revenue with the daily state reports and works with Zoann to reconcile licensees issued to cash receipts. In response to the legislature wanting Boards, to have a lock box which is astronomically expensive, Dr. Robinson and Mrs. Dean are working on a system to allow applicants and licensee to pay online with a credit card, that Dr. Robinson will subsequently reconcile until our licensing system can accommodate everything other than just renewals, to do so.

Dr. Robinson asked about extending renewals for HADs without penalty just as we have done for AUDs and SLPs, due to the state of emergency. Ms. Mouzone reported that there have been 64/114 HAD renewals thus far. Dr. Barbara McClendon made a motion to keep the renewals open without penalty until our April Board meeting when we can revisit if there are still HADs needing to renew that have not done so at that time. Ms. Carolyn Stine seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous except for Dr. Stacey Samuel-Cole who abstained.

TOEFL- Dr. Robinson shared research on what academic programs require for the TOEFL score for admission. Mr. John Rouse made a motion to make the minimum passing score as 80 combined. Ms. Ellen Stein seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Med Chi Webinars- In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Health, are giving free CEU seminars. They are giving 1 AMA hour credit for each course and Dr. Robinson wanted to seek approval from the Board to offer 1 hour of related CEU credit from the Board. These will be added to the CEU list for approval at this meeting.

At the request of the Maryland Academy of Audiology to have access to Board Counsel's written advice on the difference between "licensure" vs. "registration," a vote was conducted on allowing outside entities to have access to the Board Counsel Advice. Ms. Carolyn Stine made motion to not release any information to outside entities to have access to written Board Counsel advice. Ms. Silverman seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Robinson reminded the Board that they need to complete the 2020 financial disclosure filing.

Legislative Committee – For the sake of time, Dr. Mertes requested that Dr. Robinson send out an email to try and obtain volunteers and discuss their authority to recommend positions on bills to the Board in a future open meeting session.

**Deputy Director Report: Oluremi Dean**

Deputy Director Oluremi Dean reported we have already gone live with the CEU application online. We will also be able to pay licensing and other fees online. The applicants can now go on our website and complete fillable applications. We are planning on going live on February 1<sup>st</sup> with Smartsheet, which will allow for online credit card payments, applications and law exams.

**Budget Report - Dr. Candace Robinson**

Dr. Robinson reported as of Oct. our balance was 269, 334.71 and the Nov. balance was 235,227.00. We do not have the December report has of yet.

**Chair Report- Dr. Jennifer Mertes**

NONE

**License Coordinator Update**

Ms. Zoann Mouzone –reported there are a total of 5,382 Licensee for 2021. There are a total of 2,115 license renewals for AUD and SLP 2020. There are a total of 337 non-renewed for AUD and SLP 2020. There 60 Board applications for approval. For the 2020 HAD license renewal it is a total of 64.

**Review and Approval for Licensee**

Dr. Barbara McClendon made a motion to approve all licensees approved by Board staff. Mr. John Rouse seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**Review for Committee List of CEU'S for Board Approval**

Ms. Jill Silverman made a motion to approve all CEUs except for the Phono-Graphix Reading course and adding the MedChi series courses discussed earlier in this meeting as approved for 1 hour each of related CEUs for all disciplines. Ms. Ellen Stein seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

**Correspondence & F.Y.I**

Dr. Robinson announced earlier that our bill HB600 has been dropped. It is the bill to revise our statutes.

**Next Board Meeting – February 18, 2020**

**Adjournment**

Ms. Ellen Stein made a motion to adjourn the regular session of the Board meeting. Dr. Stacey Samuels Cole seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. The regular session meeting ended at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Jennifer Mertes, AuD.  
Chair