

BOARD OF EXAMINERS IN OPTOMETRY

01/27/2021- Regular Session Minutes - Videoconference

A. Call to Order Virtual meeting was called to order at 9:33 am by the Board President, Mesheca Bunyon O.D. Board members also present included, Kelechi Mezu Nnabue, O.D., Mark Gordon, O.D. Marcie Lerner, O.D. Fran Burgos, O.D., Rona Pepper and Margaret Hubbard. Staff present were Patricia Bennett, Board Executive Director, Kecia Dunham, Licensing Coordinator, Board Counsel, Deb Donohue. Lillian Reese Legislation/Regulations Liaison was on the call. Guests in attendance on the call included Cheryl Frazier and Jen Cohen, MOA. Dr. Bunyon read the Board's opening statement into the record as well as the Board's mission statement and notice about public attendance. Total in attendance was 13 people.

Maryland Board of Examiners in Optometry Mission Statement

The Board of Examiners in Optometry was created in 1914 The Board of Examiners in Optometry is composed of five optometrist members in our case Mesheca Bunyon, O.D., Kelechi Mezu, O.D., Fran Burgos, O.D., Marcie Lerner, O.D., and Mark Gordon, O.D., and two consumer members Rona Pepper and Margaret Hubbard. All members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Secretary of Health. The Board is mandated to regulate the practice of optometry in Maryland and protect the public health and welfare of its citizens by ensuring the delivery of vision services by qualified optometrists. It is the responsibility of the Board to:

- *Credential and license applicants
- *Certify optometrists to use diagnostic pharmaceutical agents and therapeutic pharmaceutical Agents in practice of optometry
- *Promulgate and adopt regulations to govern the practice of optometry in Maryland
- *Monitor continuing education programs and continuing education compliance
- *Investigate complaints against licensees concerning alleged violations of the law
- *Conduct hearings concerning these violations
- *Discipline licensees found to be in violation of the law

COMAR 10.01 14.02 Public Attendance

The general public may attend and observe an open session of a public body within or established by the Maryland Department of Health. B. Except in instances when a public body expressly invites public testimony, questions, comments, or other forms of public participation, or when public participation is otherwise authorized by law a member of the public attending an open session may not participate in the session.

Dr. Bunyon also asked if there were any other people joining us today. She asked for them to introduce themselves. Cheryl Frazier from MOA and Jen Cohen from MOA introduced themselves. Lillian Reese was also on the call. Based on google meet count, there were 14 people at the meeting.

B. Approval of Agenda: Dr. Bunyon asked for approval of the agenda as well as a change to allow Ms Lillian review some new legislative updates. Ms Hubbard made a motion which was seconded by Dr. Burgos. Motion passed.

C. Review and Approval of Minutes: The minutes were reviewed and Dr. Mezu called for corrections. Dr. Gordon made a motion to accept the minutes while Dr. Lerner seconded the motion. Minutes were accepted as read and motion passed.

D. Committee Reports

1. Continuing Education - Fran Burgos, O.D.

Dr. Burgos went over the MOA submittal of On Demand courses. The new MOA course on Interlinks (Dr. Gaul). Motion was made by Dr. Gordon and seconded by Dr. Burgos. Motion passed to approve the course.

A motion was made to approve a course on Sjogren's Dry Eyes by Dr. Guo, Motion was made by Dr. Burgos and seconded by Ms. Pepper. Motion passed to approve the course.

A motion was made to approve a course on oral therapeutics by Dr. Casey, Motion was made by Dr. Burgos and seconded by Ms. Hubbard. Motion passed to approve the course.

A motion was made to approve a course on co-management of Glaucoma, Motion was made by Dr. Burgos and seconded by Dr. Gordon. Motion passed to approve the course.

Dr. Bunyon inquired as to when the courses would run and Jen Cohen stated within 30 days.

2. **Budget - Rona Pepper - As of 01/10/2021 for FY 21**

Expenditure Budget Available - \$144,215
Special Fund Balance - \$194,902

3. **ARBO- Highlights by Mesheca Bunyon, O.D.**

Dr. Bunyon stated that there was nothing new and the Board talked about the ARBO 2020 In Review article which was in the newsletter. Dr. Mezu and Dr. Bunyon thanked Ms. Dunham for her amazing effort in compiling the newsletter. Dr. Bunyon also mentioned that she and Ms. Bennett attended an NBEO sponsored session reviewing the proposed changes to Part III of the exam.

E. Old Business

1. **Regulations:** Standards of Quality for TPAs and Telehealth Regulations are still pending in the Department probably until after the close of the legislative session.

2. **2021 Legislative Session:** The Board discussed and voted on delegating to the Legislative Committee the authority to make recommendations and take positions about legislation on its behalf. Dr. Gordon volunteered to assist Dr. Mezu on the committee. The Board authorized Ms. Bennett to prepare the Board position papers and letters or sign on with other Boards for joint legislation of interest.

Lillian Reese, the Legislative/Regulations Coordinator, reported on bills of interest and provided the attached minutes documenting her presentation and Board discussion.

NBEO-OSLEO Contract: This was discussed and Dr. Bunyon and Dr. Lerner finalized the 50 questions needed and the contract was already vetted by Board Counsel. Motion was made to send the questions to NBEO and was seconded by Ms. Hubbard. The exam and the agreement will be sent to NBEO. Kecia Dunham stated that the Board needed to set a launch date.

Executive Director's Report:

1. 2021 Annual Bulletin/Newsletter - Ms. Bennett informed the Board that Kecia Dunham had prepared and disseminated the newsletter and recognized her for her efforts.
- 2 ARBO – Member Board Executive Committee Survey - Ms. Bennett presented a survey to Member Board Executives in an effort to assist with better understanding how Boards operate in other states. The results will be made available to ARBO and the EDs.
3. COVID – 19 Coronavirus Pandemic Relevant Issues - MDH/ State Updates - Teleworking remains the plan for state employees and vaccines will be available for staff in the future.
4. Legislative Audit - The Optometry Board was not cited specifically for any audit issues but was included in a couple of citations where most of the Boards were noted.
5. Financial Disclosure Filing Reminder - Deadline is 4/30/21

6. Use of Corporate Name - The Board will no longer issue authorizations for the use of corporate name. There are no statutory or regulatory provisions for the Board to do so.

7. Board Planning – Legislative Proposal, Sunset, Goals & Objectives - Ms. Bennett indicated that the Board held a strategic planning session in August 2018. She noted that the Board may want to review and evaluate its goal and objectives in addition to preparing for introducing legislation in 2022 to extend the termination date set at 2023.

New Business

1. Licensees issued: The Board approved the 4 applicants for licensure listed below. Dr. Mezu made a motion to approve and Dr. Lerner seconded the motion to accept. The Board's vote was unanimous.

TA 2777 Jesse Fertig 10/5/20

TA 2778 Marissa Gomez 10/28/20

TA 2779 Sharon Williams 10/30/20

DA 1187 Steven Sharma 10/23/20

Article: Dr. Lerner thanked Dr. Mezu for her article on Vaccines entitled "All About vaccines" which was published under the MOA Newsletter to educate both the public and practitioners on vaccine updates.

2. Attorney General's COVID-19 Access to Justice Task Force Report - Informational

H. Adjournment

Dr. Bunyon called for a motion to adjourn the open session at 11:09 a.m. and convene an administrative session to discuss administrative matters and quasi-judicial matters and to comply with in order to comply with specific constitutional, statutory or judicially imposed requirements that prevent public disclosure about a particular proceeding or matter and to discuss the investigation of complaints against specific licensees.

Motion was made by Dr. Mezu and seconded by Dr. Lerner. The Board's vote was unanimous. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Kelechi Mezu Nnabue, O.D., Secretary