

NH BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS

121 S. FRUIT STREET, SUITE 302

CONCORD, NH 03301-2412

MONDAY, June 1, 2020

PUBLIC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Dennis Hannon, DDS, Vice President, the NH Board of Dental Examiners (“Board”), convened a public meeting of the Board on June 1, 2020 at 3:05p.m. Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. There is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor’s Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, it was confirmed that public access to the meeting by telephone or other electronic means was possible. Zoom teleconferencing technology was in use for this electronic meeting.

All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 646 558 8656, or by clicking on the following website address: <https://zoom.us/j/928231273>

Public notice with the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonic instructions have also been provided on the website of the Board at: <https://www.oplc.nh.gov/dental-medicine/index.htm>. Additionally, the public notice indicated to contact Christine Senko at 271-7618 or Christine.Senko@oplc.nh.gov if there were problems with access.

It was noted that no one from the public expressed issues in accessing the meeting platform. In the event the public was unable to access the meeting, the meeting would have been adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** taken during this meeting were done by **roll call vote**. The following members announced their presence and confirmed no one else was in the room with them:

Dennis Hannon, DDS, Vice President (DH)
Lisa Scott, RDH (LS)
Ellen Legg, RDH (EL)
Linda Tatarczuch, MSW, Public Member (LT)
Tara Levesque Vogel, DMD (TV)
Roger Achong, DMD (RA)
Jay Patel, DDS (JP)

Attendees: Christine Senko, Administrator; Lindsey Courtney, Interim Executive Director

1. **Review of Public Minutes –May 4, 2020:** Upon motion by TV and second by JP, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to accept the minutes as submitted.
2. **Update Dental Hygienist Committee (DHC) and NH Dental Hygienist Association (NHDHA)**

- a. Minutes from the May 4, 2020 Dental Hygiene Committee (DHC) - Upon motion by EL and second by TV, the Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes as submitted.
 - b. Report from DHC – Myra Nikitas, RDH reported the following:
 - i. The committee discussed the recent changes to Executive Order #29, Exhibit H. It was noted that Hygienists are able to obtain remote CEUS through December 31, 2020. It was also noted that this category of licensees has an additional year to obtain live CEUS for their renewal.
 - c. Report from New Hampshire Dental Hygiene Association (NHDHA) – Myra Nikitas, RDH, President, NHDHA reported the following:
 - i. Delegates are preparing for a virtual House of Delegates meeting later in June.
3. **Dental Society Update** – Mike Auerbach, Executive Director, NH Dental Society, provided the following comments:
- The NHDS is pleased to announce the installment of our 2020-2021 Board of Trustees. Dr. Joshua Osofsky has taken the reins as President, with Dr. Melissa Kennell (President-Elect), Dr. Brenda Berkal (First Vice President), Dr. George Felt (2nd Vice President), Dr. Drew Wilson (Delegate At-Large), Dr. Earle Simpson (Secretary-Treasurer) and Dr. Lindsey Jackson (Immediate Past President) comprising our Executive Officers.
 - As you know, dental practices in NH are largely reopened (based on PPE and adherence to the new guidelines). Our biggest areas of concern at this point are current PPE supplies and economic recovery.
 - We are greatly concerned about disturbing public comments (made to the members of the Governor’s Economic Reopening Task Force, the Governor’s Office for Emergency Relief and Recover and the media) made by the New Hampshire Dental Hygienists Association during April and May. In these comments, NHDHA President Myra Nikitas very clearly suggested (without citing any specific examples) that dental offices are unsafe and that hygienists “don’t feel safe to go back to work”. Another member of the NHDHA, Susanne Kuehl, suggested that the infection control protocols currently in place are insufficient to protect office staff. These public statements are included in the links below. Such statements, which NHDHA cannot substantiate beyond rhetorical commentary, are wholly inappropriate and dangerous to the public. In fact, the Governor, hearing the unfounded claims of the NHDHA before allowing dental practices to reopen in May, initially echoed such statements. Mike indicated that links were provided to the Board Administrator.
 - <https://www.wmur.com/article/dental-hygienists-worry-about-safety-as-dentist-offices-begin-to-reopen/32452264>
 - <https://www.nhpr.org/post/nh-dentists-open-elective-procedures-despite-cdc-recommendations-remain-closed#stream/0>

Chris Senko indicated to members of the Board, that the Board does not have regulatory authority over the Hygiene Society and/or Dental Society, therefore cannot make recommendations regarding these concerns.

Ms. Nikitas later commented that she finds Mike Auerbach’s comments inappropriate and unprofessional. She has offered to talk and meet with him to discuss concerns. She indicated that the NHDHA represents the interests of 1500 hygienists in the state. Dr. Achong questioned this statement and clarified that not all 1500 hygienists are members of the NHDHA.

4. **Board Office Comments**

No comments noted this month.

5. Alternatives to Board Examinations for Dental Graduates and Dental Hygiene Graduates – Discussion

Members discussed at length concern regarding the availability of clinical portions of national examinations to qualify for licensure. Ellen Legg, RDH, Board member provided information explaining the non-patient clinical examination options for hygiene applicants. The ADEX Dental Hygiene Committee approved a manikin based option (typodont) for use in the patient clinical treatment exam (PTCE) portion of the test. It was noted that this manikin has not been widely tested. Additionally, states are deciding whether or not to permit this as an alternative to live clinical exam or to only accept the second portion of the exam, the Computer Stimulated Clinical Examination (CSCE). It was noted that the NH Den Rules indicate the acceptance of the ADEX exam and discussed whether or not that implied acceptance of the changes to the ADEX examination. It was also noted that ADEX has approved use of the CompeDont manikin for the dental examination for restorative dentistry. The CompeDont was in place prior to the COVID pandemic and was previously being offered as an alternative to a live patient exam.

Deb Albrecht, CDA, RDH, M.Ed., Department Head of Allied Health Education at NHTI was present and explained some of the barriers the 29 recent NHTI hygiene graduates are facing. NHTI was not able to host the PTCE exam this year due to the COVID pandemic. Many students are traveling to states to complete their national board exam but are finding it difficult to find a state that offers the PTCE portion of the exam. She is asking for alternative pathways to be examined for licensure.

Members discussed options to licensure and expressed concern over portability of licensure, potential impact on hygiene workforce in NH, acceptance of the manikin and developing a process for both dental and hygiene licensees. Participants from the public included Stacey Plourde, RDH, CDCA Examiner; Pat Connolly-Atkins, RDH, ADEX, Dental Hygiene Exam Past Chair, CDCA, CSCE Examination Committee member and several recent 2020 hygiene graduates.

Some concerns were expressed over utilizing manikins and how to address the unique human situations and potential for emergency situations. Also discussed was whether or not changes to licensure requirements would be permanent or temporary.

Members discussed options of provisional licensure, waiving exam requirements for 2020 graduates, and a temporary license process. Lindsey Courtney, Interim Executive Director, OPLC indicated that depending on the decision, either an Emergency Rule or Emergency Order would need to occur in order to implement temporary changes.

Upon motion made by TV and seconded by LS, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to grant temporary licenses to dental and dental hygiene applicants who have proven to not be able to complete clinical examination components. Licensees with a temporary license will be required to complete the clinical portion of the exam with either a live patient or manikin within 180 days after the NH State of Emergency is declared to be over.

Chris Senko will send the motion forward and communicate the process as information becomes available.

6. Review of Executive Order #29, Exhibit H:

The waivers to continuing education were briefly discussed. This change does address the questions for accepting remote learning, including webinars for credit. It was noted that the audit for the dentist renewal period ending 4/1/20 does not need to occur.

7. **NH Professional Health Program**

Sally Garhart, MD was present and indicated that the NPHP was not awarded the OPLC contract for the professional health program. She informed members that a company based in Indiana, Parkdale was awarded the contract. She is currently obtaining legal advice on the process to retain files and where to house records of graduates of the program. Members expressed gratitude to Dr. Garhart and her team.

8. **Teledentistry**

No new items to discuss. It was noted that providers could practice telehealth as a result of different Executive Orders being implemented during the State of Emergency.

9. **Licensure and Reports**

a. **Dentist Applications Approved**

- i. Katerina Chernykhvska, DMD (#04550)
- ii. Stephen J. Reichheld, Jr., DMD (#04551)
- iii. Sook-Bin Woo, DMD (#04549)

b. **Hygienist Applications**

- i. Aurelija Assennato, RDH (#03633)
- ii. Tracy R. Schwartz, RDH (#03632)

c. **Anesthesia/Sedation** –no applications this month

Upon motion made by DH and second by LT, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to approve items listed in 9.a, b and c above.

At 5:26 p.m., pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c), and upon motion by TV, second by LT, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to go out of public session and into non-public session because public disclosure may render a proposed action ineffective or adversely affect the reputation of a person other than a Board member.

At 6:50 p.m., upon motion by TV and second by LT, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to go out of non-public meeting and into public session.

Dr. Hannon adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.