



**TENNESSEE BOARD OF
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

April 19, 2024

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Tennessee Board of Physician Assistants (hereinafter, "the Board") was called to order on April 19, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Poplar Room, Ground Floor, Metro Center Complex, 665 Mainstream Drive Nashville, TN 37243.

Board Members Present: Robert White, PA-C
 Andrew Hull, PA-C
 C. Marie Patterson, Chair, PA-C
 Robert Kasper, MD

Board Members Absent:

Gregory Cain, PA-C
Barbara Thornton, Consumer Member
J. Seth Weathersby, PA-C
Christina Free, Secretary, PA-C
David Roberts, PA-C

Staff Present:

Stacy Tarr, Executive Director
Brandi Allocco Administrative Director
Tracy Alcock, Office of General Counsel
Dexter Hawkins, Board Administrator

At the beginning of the board meeting, Tracy Alcock, the board attorney, clarified to the board members that the current attendance of four members is separate from a quorum, as a quorum requires at least five members. However, Ms. Alcock also explained that a quorum can be established with three or more members present for disciplinary matters.

Robert White has announced that he will be stepping away from his duties. During his absence, Dr. Kasper, Marie Patterson, and Andrew Hull will make decisions regarding disciplinary matters.

I. OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIONS

The Board 's Statistical Complaint report. New complaints for PA's open are (18), total closed complaints are (13), (1) received a letter of concern, and (1) was sent a letter of warning.

Of those numbers listed above the following are regarding which category they fall under: (1) substance abuse, (1) sexual misconduct, (2) malpractice/negligence, (10) unprofessional conduct, (1) criminal conviction, and (3) outside the investigative scope.

Under Orthopedic PA's, there were no new complaints.

II. FINACIAL REPORT

Emily Godwin presented the financial report, underscoring the crucial need for the current carryover balance to meet the requirement of maintaining a balance three times the annual expenses, a key indicator of our financial stability and responsibility. Ms. Godwin recommended a 20% fee increase, which the board initially was interested in. Mr. Hull inquired about the last fee increase, and an audience member mentioned a reduction 12 or 13 years ago due to an excessively high carryover balance. In the previous meeting, the board requested comparisons to similar professions. However, Ms. Godwin clarified that such comparisons are not valid as those professions have additional revenue sources that are not available to us, such as government funding.

Tracy Alcock proposed a 25% fee increase, to which Andrew Hull expressed interest. Ms. Godwin stated that a 25% increase would result in a net gain of approximately \$100,000, placing the board in a more stable financial position. However, she cautioned that this analysis does not account for potential changes in fiscal year 2025, including possible staff pay raises and other expenditures. Mr. Hull noted that a 25% increase is reasonable, projecting the initial fee to be \$425.00 and the renewal fee to be \$225.00. Tracy Alcock plans to present a rule proposal at the next meeting, allowing the board to vote on the preferred fee increase.

III. ADMINSTRATIVE OFFICE

The following activity regarding Physician Assistants transpired in the administrative office between February 16, 2024, and April 15, 2024.

New Applications Received:

- Full licensure 83
- Temporary 0
- Upgrade to Full 0

• Reinstatements	5
• OPA Full Licensure	0
Total New Licenses Issued :	86
Total Number of Renewals:	355
Total Number of Online Renewals:	337
Average Renewals Online:	94%
Total Number of Reinstatements	5

As of April 15, 2024, the total number of active Physician Assistant licenses is 3,847. Of those licensees, 3,184 have a Tennessee mailing address. The total number of Orthopedic Physician Assistant licensees as of April 15, 2024, is 8

IV. APPROVAL OF AGREED CITATIONS

There were no citations for approval.

V. OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL AND PRESENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY ORDERS

Report from the Office of General Counsel by Tracy Alcock, Advisory Attorney

Ms. Tracy Alcock from the Office of General Counsel emphasized the crucial duty of the board members to ensure impartial and objective decision-making. This is a responsibility that each member should take seriously, as it is fundamental to the integrity of the board's work. Board members were asked to disclose any potential conflicts of interest regarding issues on the agenda to determine if recusal is warranted, further underlining their commitment to this duty. Ms. Alcock also informed the board that rule amendments are planned once the legislative session concludes. If passed, several bills that could impact the board's rules are under consideration.

It was noted that the Health Commissioner recently approved a new policy on public comments at public meetings. This policy, which sets parameters for individuals who wish to address the board directly during the one designated public comment period on the agenda, was developed with the board members' needs and responsibilities in mind. It is a clear demonstration of the respect and consideration for the board's time and focus. Then, an update was given regarding current legal matters involving the board, including pending litigation, appeals, and civil suits. The report closed with a discussion of two bills relevant to the PA board under review in the state legislature this session. One bill concerns endorsement for experienced PAs, and the other concerns the adoption of an interstate licensure compact.

Petition(s) for Order Modification

1. Logan Martin, PA 4357

On September 28, 2023, a consent order was issued to Mr. Logan Martin. Mr. Martin cited financial constraints and bankruptcy filing as reasons for his inability to complete the required

evaluation, which costs \$9,150. He currently earns \$2,000 monthly and estimates it will take approximately six months to save the required funds. As a result of the order, Mr. Logan's license was suspended. Within 90 days, he is required to undergo an evaluation from the Vanderbilt Comprehensive Assessment Program and comply with any recommendations. Mr. Logan and Tamiaka Gray from the Tennessee Medical Foundation discussed the unavailability of the Vanderbilt Comprehensive Assessment Program as a provider. Ms. Gray presented alternative evaluation options, emphasizing that Mr. Logan must complete an evaluation before entering a contract with TMF. Mr. Logan sought to extend the 90-day deadline in the order to six months to a year to complete the evaluation. Mr. Logan confirmed his request to adjust the deadline when asked for clarification. It was proposed that VCAP be removed from the order as they are no longer affiliated with TMF, and Andrew Hull made a motion to grant Mr. Martin six to twelve months to receive an evaluation from an approved TMF course. Dr. Kasper and the passed seconded the motion passed.

2. Michelle Vasireddy, PA2607

Ms. Vasireddy seeks to have her restriction from prescribing controlled substances lifted. The second order of compliance involves transitioning her license from suspension to probationary status. She is requesting permission to petition on June 7, 2024, to reinstate her ability to prescribe controlled substances. Ms. Tracy explains the rule regarding order modifications under 1130-01-.15, Section 4. Mr. Helmbrecht, Ms. Vasireddy's attorney, addresses the board to explain that his client recognized her substance abuse problem and took proactive steps, including relinquishing her DEA license and completing a 30-day inpatient treatment program in Florida. She has 11 months remaining under the Tennessee Medical Foundation (TMF) contract. Mr. Helmbrecht acknowledges that her employment alone is insufficient grounds to modify her order but requests the board consider the impact of COVID-19 and the lack of meetings during that period. Ms. Tamiaka Webb supports Ms. Vasireddy's petition, noting her compliance since signing the agreement on March 6, 2020, with all urinalysis tests returning negative and no issues reported. Mr. Kasper seeks clarification on the methods Ms. Vasireddy used to forge prescriptions, to which she responds that it was done both by paper and phone calls. Ms. Vasireddy further explains that she has a nurse sponsor, attends weekly therapy sessions, sees a psychiatrist every three months, and is considering extending her TMF contract beyond five years. Dr. Kasper's motions to accept the petition, seconded by Andrew Hull. The motion passes.

Petition for Order(s) of Compliance

1. Timothy Thomason, PA 914

Timothy Thomason's consent order, approved by the board on January 8, 2021, and ratified by the Board of Medical Examiners on January 12, 2021, placed his license on probation for three years. The order prohibited him from prescribing opioids for six months and required him to enroll in and complete a course on prescribing controlled substances offered by Vanderbilt University. Mr. Thomason has fulfilled all the requirements outlined in his consent order. He has provided proof of course completion and payment of his civil penalties. Ms. Tracy presents the order of compliance, lifting his probation and restoring his license to an unencumbered status. Dr. Kasper motions to approve the petition for the order of compliance, seconded by Andrew Hull. The motion passes.

Public Comment

None

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

These meeting minutes were ratified by the Board at their June 7, 2024, meeting.