

**LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF OPTOMETRY EXAMINERS**

**Law Office of Taggart and Morton LLC**

**New Orleans, LA**

**MINUTES – August 12, 2022**

**I. Roll Call/Call to Order**

The roll was called at 9:37am with present: Drs. Heitmeier, Anastasio, Avallone, Gerdes and Mr. Dale Benoit. Dr. Wroten arrived with meeting in progress following previous notice. Also present were board council Mr. AJ Herbert, III and Public Guest, Theresa Roy; OAL Members Present:

1. Rob Janot,
2. Mark Roy,
3. Kevin Kasovich,
4. Brett Bennett
5. Camile Chiasson,
6. Tim Barry
7. Jon Bowman
8. Laura Buisson
9. Marc Ardoin

Declaring a quorum was present, Dr. Heitmeier called the meeting to order.

**II. Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was amended upon motion by Avallone/Heitmeier to include a discussion regarding Telehealth registration and possible fee. Passed unanimously. Motion to amend agenda to include discussion of License by Endorsement qualifications failed with by Mr. Benoit opposition.

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**III. Approval of Minutes**

Approval of minutes of the previous meeting was delayed upon motion by Heitmeier/Benoit. Passed unanimously.

**IV. Secretary's Report**

**a. Finance & Budget Report**

Dr. Avallone presented a financial report including a P&L statement, Balance Sheet, and Budget comparison for year 2022 as of July 31st.

**b. License Activity**

Renewals for re-billed 2021 continue, with more than half of the billed accounts making payment.

No retired licenses to report.

No additional Inactive licenses requested

Endorsement requests received - two

Dr. Selvin Gnanakkan – currently licensed in OK

Qualified – waiting for the law testing to be scheduled with Dr. Lewis

24 candidates registered and completed the state licensing exam in Shreveport on Jul 15-16 administered by Dr. Stephan Lewis. After scoring, Dr. Lewis has informed the board that all candidates passed. 22 of those candidates have completed the initial licensure application and the required Opioid course and have been issued a license number. License Certificates will be issued when calligraphy and signatures have been completed.

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**c. Complaints**

No new complaints received

**V. State Audit Update**

**a. General Update**

Dr. Heitmeier requested a listing of Findings that have been resolved and those unresolved.

**b. Litigation**

Discussed in Executive Session

**c. Ethics training**

Discussed – live training is available as well as online

**d. Sexual Harassment Prevention**

New policy discussed in New Business

**OLD BUSINESS**

**VI. Telehealth Registration & Fee**

Discussion was held regarding the registration process and possible fee. Mr. Herbert pointed out that the LSBME has a separate registry for those physicians conducting telehealth as well as different fees for in/out of state. The board requested Dr. Avallone to develop a Telehealth Application which can be discussed edited and adopted in the future. Any decision on a possible fee was deferred in favor of more research. This topic will be continued at the next board meeting.

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**VII. Dispensing of Pharmaceuticals**

Mr. Herbert will check on progress and status and inform the board.

**VIII. Discussion of Alternate Route of Licensing Exam**

Mr. Herbert informed the board that after researching the topic a rule promulgation is necessary to allow all testing to be conducted by the NBEO.

**IX. Informational Video**

Scripts should be sent to and approved by Mr. Herbert and recording of video for each topic should be completed by \_\_\_\_\_.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**X. 2021 LLA Audit update**

Drs. Avallone and Heitmeier have been in communication with Daniel Garber, the LLA assigned to the LSBOE 2021 audit. Dr. Avallone has been cooperating and providing all information requested by the LLA as fast as possible. The LLA expects that there will be some Findings that will be unresolved and some new Findings but in general fewer Findings are expected for 2021. No report from the LLA is available currently.

**XI. State Board Licensing Exam Documentation**

Dr. Avallone reported confusion by some candidates as to when required documentation must be received by the LSBOE. Dr. Avallone pointed out that the law requires all required documents for application to be received 30 prior to testing unless a delay is no fault of the applicant. Successful

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candidates then have 90 day following the exam to satisfy remaining requirements before being issued a license number. If those requirements are not completed within 90 days, no license will be issued.

**XII. Reactivation of License – Dr. Geoffrey Paterson**

Discussion was held regarding Dr. Paterson’s request to reactivate his TPA license. It was pointed out that he requested in December 2005 the TPA license be inactivated. LSBOE records show that he TPA license was dropped in December 2005. The issue for the board is whether any license could be inactivated in 2005 and if so, can it now be activated at the same level or must a new license be issued at the highest level of licensure.

**XIII. Sexual Harassment Policy approval**

Upon motion Avallone/Anastasio the sexual harassment policy previous sent via email to all board member was adopted & approved unanimously. The new policy will be placed on the board website.

**XIV. LSBOE Member Nomination ballots**

Dr. Avallone provided a new prototype nomination ballot for discussion. Mr. Herbert suggested editing. A suggested mail out date was offered as August 19<sup>th</sup> with ballot counting taking place at Taggart Morton on October 21<sup>st</sup> with at least two LSBOE board members present. An official meeting of the board is not required. A notice will be sent with the ballots informing licensees when and where the ballots will be counted.

**XV. Licensee Communication Video**

Dr. Heitmeier led a discussion regarding video topics and distribution to each board member. Videos should be produced in coat & tie with good

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audio and lighting. He asked that each video be sent to Mr. Benoit for review by Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.

**XVI. Update from ARBO meeting**

Dr. Gerdes led a discussion about the benefits and increase quality of COPE approved courses without the interference of industry interference or advertising. He mentioned that COPE accreditation is equal to ACCME accreditation in medicine.

**XVII. Continuing Education changes**

After reviewing the benefits of COPE approved education Dr. Gerdes offered ...

Motion #1 - (2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Benoit) to accept COPE approved courses as an approved source for the 8 required TPA hours which currently have limited approved sources. Motion passed 5/1 Dr. Anastasio voted NO

Motion #2 - (2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Benoit) to require all 16 required hours of CE to be COPE approved. Dr. Wroten voiced objection. Motion failed 3/2  
Dr. Heitmeier did not vote.

Motion #3 – Heitmeier (2<sup>nd</sup> by Anastasio) to allow a change in allowable online CE from currently allowed 2 hours increased to 6 hours of COPE approved non-TPA. No objections were voiced. Motion passed unanimously.

**XVIII. Mississippi License question**

Led by Dr. Anastasio the board discussed whether a Mississippi license holder would qualify for license by endorsement in Louisiana since Mississippi does not allow a laser procedure (LPI) that Louisiana does allow. Further research is suggested before a decision can be made.



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**XXII. Next Meeting**

September 23, 2022

Location - Law Office of Taggart and Morton LLC, 9:30 am

**Adjourn – 1:02 pm**

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Gary Avallone, O.D.  
Secretary LSBOE

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David Heitmeier, O.D.  
President LSBOE