



State Medical Board of Ohio

**RESPIRATORY CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

**December 8, 2020**

via live-streamed video conference

<b>Members:</b> Harish Kakarala, MD Karen May, BSOM, RRT, CRT, L-RT Edward Warren, MD Robert Pelfrey, DHSc, MSHS, RRT- ACCS, NPS, RPFT, AE-C Amy Rodenhausen, M.Ed, RRT Sanja Keller, MS, RRT, RCP	<b>Staff:</b> Jill Reardon, Deputy Director of External Affairs Chelsea Wonski, Director of Legislative Affairs Cierra Lynch, Stakeholder Liaison Julie Williams, Public Information Officer Benton Taylor, Board Parliamentarian
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The meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m.

#### Minutes Review

**Ms. May moved to approve the draft minutes of the September 10, 2020 meeting of the Respiratory Care Advisory Council as corrected. Ms. Rodenhausen seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

#### Legislative Update

**Senate Bill 246, Occupational Licensure Reciprocity:** Ms. Wonski stated that this bill would require the Medical Board to grant licensure reciprocity to applicants who are already licensed in another state. Board staff has worked with the bill's sponsor and the committee chair to discuss concerns about the Board's ability to make determinations on whether or not an applicant has met Ohio's qualifications for licensure. Ms. Wonski reported that proposed amendments were adopted last week in committee that will allow for greater flexibility to the Medical Board, and all licensing boards, in making determinations on applicants' fitness to practice. Ms. Wonski noted that these changes will impact all licensing boards.

**Senate Bill 364, Interstate Medical Licensure Compact:** Ms. Wonski stated that this legislation would require Ohio to join several other states in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC). Board staff has traveled to meet with the bill's sponsor and express the Board's concerns. The Board's legislative staff continues to monitor this bill, as well as federal legislation that could impact the IMLC.

**House Bill 263, Occupational Licensing:** Ms. Wonski stated that this occupational licensing bill would require the Board to create a comprehensive list of criminal offenses that would prevent an applicant from becoming licensed in Ohio. The Board's staff has worked with several other health care boards to develop a solution to the concerns with this language. Last week, the Senate heard the

bill for the third time and the Medical Board and other boards submitted testimony in support of amendments to make the language more palatable

### **CoARC Documents**

Ms. Lynch stated that the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) has posted its 2019 final report. Among the findings, only one respiratory care education program, Cuyahoga Community College, had a retention rate below 70%. The full 2020 report has not yet been published, but it will hopefully be available for review early next year. Ms. Lynch stated that a representative from the Ohio Society for Respiratory Care will probably present its workforce report to the Council at its first meeting in 2021.

### **Licensure Renewal Deadline Extension**

Ms. Reardon stated that House Bill 404, which has been signed into law by the Governor, extends the license renewal period due to the ongoing COVID-19 emergency. Under House Bill 404, any licensee whose license is/was normally due for renewal between March 9, 2020, and April 1, 2021, now has until July 1, 2021 to renew their license. The Board is still encouraging their licensees to renew early. Ms. Reardon noted that following the declared emergency, licensees' renewal schedule will return to what it had been previously.

### **COVID-19 Impact on RCP Staffing Needs**

Ms. Reardon stated that respiratory care professionals have been on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Board is keenly aware of the stresses on that profession during the current surge of cases. Last week, Ms. Reardon emailed many of the universities that provide education for respiratory care professionals asking them to continue their efforts to encourage anyone who is eligible to apply for a limited license to practice respiratory care to do so. The Board is making a concerted effort to expedite licensure during the pandemic, especially for respiratory care professionals. Ms. Reardon asked the Council members to inform her if they are aware of anyone who is having trouble obtaining a license.

Mr. Pelfrey commented that hospitals are having a difficult time recruiting respiratory therapists, especially with the increasing surge in patients and the ongoing care those patients require. Ms. May agreed and added that many respiratory therapists have become sick and many are also retiring due to the pandemic.

### **2021 Meeting Dates for Respiratory Care Advisory Council**

Ms. Reardon stated that she will send out the meeting schedule for the Council for 2021.

### **Respiratory Care Advisory Council Members**

Ms. Reardon stated that the terms of some members of the Council will expire in 2021. Ms. Reardon will reach out to those members to see if they are interested in being reappointed.

### **Respiratory Care Professional Licensure**

Dr. Kakarala asked about the average length of time between an application for a respiratory care license and the issuance of that license, assuming there are no issues with the application. Ms.

Reardon replied that a “clean” application with all required components can have a license issued within a week, or even in one to three days if the background check is not delayed. Ms. Reardon commented that background checks are sometimes delayed, especially during the pandemic. Dr. Kakarala stated that earlier in the pandemic, some states considered issuing licenses to out-of-state therapists if they were in good standing, but that appears to not be necessary in Ohio because the licensure process is so fast. Mr. Pelfrey opined that the Board has done a great job with licensure, but the problem is a lack of applicants compounded by the early retirement of many respiratory therapists.

Ms. Keller added that there had been student recruitment issues before the pandemic, but the pandemic has made it more challenging. Ms. Keller stated that many people do not know what respiratory therapists do because it is a relatively new profession. Ms. Keller stated that marketing and advertising could be key, noting that her educational institution aired a commercial on local networks about two-and-a-half years ago and saw a large spike in interest. There has also been discussion of apprenticeship programs at hospitals to provide a paid pathway to the respiratory care profession for individuals already working in the hospital setting.

Ms. Rodenhausen agreed with Ms. Keller’s comments and stated that recruiting has become very interesting and different during the pandemic. There has been slightly increased awareness of what a respiratory therapist does and the pandemic does not seem to be steering people away from the field. Ms. Rodenhausen stated that it is important to get the word out to everyone, especially high school students and parents, that respiratory care is a viable career path and they can often be helping patients within a year of beginning their education.

Ms. May agreed and added that some who have become unemployed and may be searching for a new career could be directed to respiratory care.

## **Adjourn**

**Dr. Kakarala moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. May seconded the motion.** All Council members voted aye. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

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