



## Boards of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine Joint Meeting on Health History Questions

October 1, 2020

**Meet-Me-Number: 888-585-9008**  
**Conference Room Number: 432-162-565**

### MINUTES

Roll Call 1:45 p.m.

#### **Board of Medicine Members Present:**

Zachariah P. Zachariah, M.D., Chair  
Hector Vila, M.D., Vice Chair  
Eleonor Pimentel, M.D.  
Scott Ackerman, M.D.  
Sarvam TerKonda, M.D.  
Kevin Cairns, M.D.  
Robert London, M.D.  
Nicholas Romanello, Consumer Member  
Andre Perez, Consumer Member  
David Diamond, M.D.  
Shailesh Gupta, M.D.  
Luz Marina Pages, M.D.  
Vacant Professional Member  
Vacant Consumer Member

#### **Board of Osteopathic Medicine Present:**

Joel Rose, D.O., Chair  
Sandra Schwemmer, D.O., Vice Chair  
Bridget Bellingar, D.O.  
Anna Hayden, D.O.  
Valerie Jackson, Consumer Member  
Vacant Consumer Member

#### **Staff Present Medicine:**

Claudia Kemp, JD, Executive Director  
Edward Tellechea, Board Counsel  
Nancy Murphy, Certified Paralegal  
Administrator  
Crystal Sanford, Program Operations Administrator  
Wendy Aills, Program Operations Administrator  
Shaila Washington, Regulatory Supervisor  
Rebecca Hewett, Regulatory Specialist III

#### **Board of Medicine Members Absent:**

Jorge Lopez, M.D.

#### **Board of Osteopathic Medicine Absent:**

Michelle Mendez, D.O.

#### **Staff Present Osteopathic Medicine**

Kama Monroe, Executive Director  
Donna McNulty, Board Counsel  
Carol Taylor, Program Operations

Jennifer Wenhold, Bureau Chief, Health Care Practitioner Regulation

**Others Present:**

For the Record Court Reporting

**Review and Approval of Proposed Health History Questions:**

Ms. Wenhold was introduced. She thanked the medical school deans for bringing the issue, with the health history questions on applications for licensure stopping medical students from seeking assistance, to the Department's attention. She said this was something the Department has been working on for two years and explained the Department's goal is to have uniform questions that all boards can use in their applications. Ms. Wenhold said the language protects the citizens of Florida while allowing medical students to feel free to seek assistance without the stigmatism attached to mental health issues.

Dr. Zachariah said the Deans would like a carve out, written in the questions, for medical students. He asked Ms. Wenhold how the Department felt about adding carve-out language.

Ms. Wenhold said the Department would not oppose a carve out as long as it applies to all boards.

Allen Grossman, Esquire, representing the Council of Florida Medical School Deans, addressed the boards regarding their request to have a carve out in the questions for medical students. He explained medical students often do not seek assistance when they are stressed out, mildly depressed or have anxiety. He said some of those students commit suicide. He explained there is a stigmatism with having to report being or had been treated for mental health issues and for that reason, students do not see help. Mr. Grossman said the health history questions discussion started and language was proposed. That language was later modified by Dr. Rose and the Deans were okay with both sets of questions. He pointed to his letter in the agenda materials with his comments concerning the Department's questions. He said the Deans are okay with that language with a carve out for medical students. He said eight out of ten Deans were on the call and available to speak including Dean John Fogarty, M.D., Dean of the Medical Students at Florida State University and Chair of the Council. He thanked everyone for working diligently on this issue.

Dr. Fogarty addressed the Boards and said he appreciated all the work that has been done and for holding this joint board meeting. He spoke about suicide and the importance of helping these physicians starting in medical school. He did say the schools have assistance available to the students, but the stigmatism keeps them from doing so.

Dean Elaine Wallace, Nova Southeastern Osteopathic Medical School spoke about three students who needed assistance but would not seek it. He provided statistics on physician suicide and the prevalence of burn out, stress and depression among physicians.

Dean Adrian Tyndall, University of Florida, said he has personally taken care of medical students with mental health issues. He said the goal is for the students to seek help and then go on to have productive careers.

Dr. Gupta asked if the medical students answer questions like these on their applications for medical school and if so, the process.

Dr. Fogarty confirmed and said medical schools are specifically prevented by the ADA to ask those types of questions on the application.

Mr. Grossman said medical students are not allowed to ask the question because the school would then need to provide assistance. He said medical schools have resources available to help but needs the Board to remove the stigmatism by approving the proposed questions.

Dr. Rose thanked Mr. Grossman for his presentation and said there is a balance between physicians needing assistance and protecting the citizens of Florida.

Mr. Grossman said the Deans were okay with the Department's language but suggested a couple changes to the preamble. The changes include changing the word "counseling" to "assistance", deleting the last sentence in the third paragraph and include a carve out for medical students.

Dr. Vila said he had concerns about last minute questions being presented. He said the Department's language is too generic and problematic.

Dr. Vila made a motion to approve the language originally presented and amended by Dr. Rose. He said the language was simple, specific and straightforward. There was no second to the motion.

Ms. Kemp stressed the Department using uniform questions in applications which is applicable to all health care professions.

Dr. Zachariah thanked the medical school deans for their participation. He said the boards needed to get this done and said the members must work with the Department to get it done.

Dr. Rose made suggestions about the language.

Dr. Bellinger said she liked Mr. Grossman's suggestion and felt Dr. Rose's changes were more compatible and easier to understand.

Dr. Diamond said he agreed with the discussion and Dr. Zachariah's comments about working with the Department. He said the Department did an excellent job and the language was fantastic.

Dr. Zachariah confirmed that included the changes recommended by Mr Grossman in the preamble.

Mr. Grossman said the Deans would still like a carve out for medical students. He said the Department can tweak the language for other professions.

A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Department's proposed language with the amendments to the preamble as discussed.

Language approved:

*The board and the department, as part of its responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public, must assess whether an applicant manifests any physical, mental health or substance use issue that impairs the applicant's ability to meet the eligibility requirements for a health care practitioner as defined in Chapter 456, Florida Statutes, and the applicable statutory practice acts.*

*The board and the department support applicants seeking treatment and views effective treatment by a licensed professional as enhancing the applicant's ability to meet the eligibility requirements to practice a health care profession.*

*Seeking assistance with stress, mild anxiety, situational depression, family or marital issues will not adversely affect the outcome of a Florida health care practitioner application. The board and the department do not request that applicants disclose such assistance.*

Dr. Rose discussed Medicine's adopted language with his members. He asked Mr. Grossman if he liked the adopted language.

Mr. Grossman said he is pleased the Board of Medicine adopted the language with the amendments, but the Deans still want a carve out for the students.

Dr. Rose polled his members to see if they wanted a carve out for medical students. The results revealed four members did not want to include the carve out.

A motion was made by an Osteopathic member, seconded and carried unanimously to adopt the same language adopted by the Board of Medicine.

Mr. Grossman thanked the boards for their consideration.

**Action taken:** adopted the Department's language with amendments as adopted by the Board of Medicine.

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 3:06 p.m.