

# Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce

## Board Meeting Minutes

**Emory Nursing Learning Center**  
250 E Ponce de Leone Ave  
Decatur, GA 30030

**April 20, 2023**

Dr. McFadden, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m. with the following Board members present:

James Barber, MD, Vice-Chairman  
William Kemp, Secretary-Treasurer  
Carolyn Clevenger, DNP  
Steven Gautney, MSHA  
Michael J. Groover, DMD  
Lily J. Henson, MD  
Indran Indrakrishnan, MD  
Amy Reeves, PA-C  
James L. Smith, Jr., MD

### **Staff Present**

Chet Bhasin  
Leanna Greenwood  
Yvette Speight  
Cherri Tucker  
Sharon Wilson  
Anita Dunbar  
Whitney Puetz (Intern)  
Augustine Agbontaen

### **Consultants to the Board**

Al Dever, MD, Ph.D., Faculty WellStar Kennestone Family Medicine Program

### **Guests**

Jocelyn Curry, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General  
Ruth Ellis, MPH, JM Georgia Department of Education  
Mark Welch, MPH, VP, Child Advocacy & Chief Diversity Officer, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta  
John Smith, Vice President, Government Relations, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

Luke Ray, Assistant Director of Government Relations, Augusta University  
Martha Elks, MD, PhD, Sr. Assoc. Dean of Educational Affairs, Morehouse School of Medicine  
Denise Kornegay, MSW, Director, Statewide AHEC  
Bethany Sherrer, Medical Association of Georgia  
Linda Grant, Executive Director, Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center  
Jean Sumner, MD, Dean, Mercer University School of Medicine  
Hugh Sosebee, JD, Vice-President, External Relations, Mercer University  
Keri Conley, General Counsel and EVP Healthcare Policy, Georgia Hospital Association  
Betsy Bates, Morehouse School of Medicine and GAAP

### **Approval of Agenda**

Dr. McFadden presented the meeting agenda to the Board for approval.

**On Motion (Barber /Kemp)**, the Board unanimously approved the agenda for April 20, 2023 meeting.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Kemp presented the meeting minutes for the January 19, 2023 meeting for review and approval.

**On Motion (Barber /Henson)**, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for January 19, 2023 board meeting.

### **Chairman's Report**

Dr. McFadden began her report by thanking Emory School of Nursing for hosting the board meeting.

Dr. McFadden reported that MEAC is in the process of re-tooling and trying to figure out regular meeting times and the Board will hear more from them at the next meeting.

She then spoke on the 2023 legislative session. She advised on the work that is being done to make sure that Georgia is an inviting place for physicians and other healthcare workers, as well as the need to continue to raise that with the legislators. She advised that there was more talk in the direction of mental health, more money for the board for GBHCW programs.

Dr. McFadden then touched on subjects that were discussed at the January 19, 2023 meeting.

- Keep a presence and get to be known by the legislators. She stated Mr. Bhasin and several board members were accomplishing that task.
- The need to get the annual reports into the hands of the legislators and the Governor going forward, to get credit for the important work that GBHCW does.

- The need to highlight the people in the communities who are the recipients of the awards, who may be helping when it comes to healthcare for Georgia citizens.
- The need for an infographic to use to educate the legislators and to focus on the budget chairs.
- The need to increase the visibility of the board of GBHCW, and to be seen as the problem solvers.
- To vet ideas due to research and strategic thinking.
- To notify the legislators when a constituent receives an award.

Dr. McFadden advised that the board would hear from three partnership organizations that are designed to increase access to Georgia citizens.

Dr. McFadden asked Dr. Jean Sumner if she would like to give any thoughts on the Health Care Workforce Commission findings.

Dr. Sumner provided a brief synopsis of the report of the commission and stated the need for nursing care in the state of Georgia is dramatic, and reestablishing and getting them out into the rural areas is very important. She also discussed the need for primary care practitioners.

Dr. McFadden introduced Dr. Clevenger to speak about the newly established Nursing Advisory Committee.

Dr. Clevenger said that the Nursing Advisory Committee had its first meeting and 15 members attended. She stated that the conversations centered around nurses in the pipeline, also nurses who are licensed but not working. She advised that this would be the focus of the group. Dr. Clevenger spoke on the number of agenda items that the committee has mapped out. She advised that the committee planned to meet quarterly over the next year, with the next meeting being in the summer. Dr. Clevenger advised that Leanna Greenwood would be the Vice Chair of the committee. That the committee is interested in recommending strategies to the Board on how to bring nurses through the pipeline or to bring licensed nurses to the bedside.

Dr. McFadden concluded her report by asking Mr. Bhasin to give the Executive Directors Report.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Bhasin started with thanking Dr. Clevenger and Emory School of Nursing for hosting the Meeting.

Mr. Bhasin noted the great work of his team and advised the board of the filling of the two vacancies. He advised the Office Coordinator positions was filed by Anita Dunbar and Sharon Wilson had assumed the role of Budget Manager. He also introduced two additional new staff

members Mr. Augustine Agbontaen is the new Data Analyst, whose role was created at HB1013 and under the supervision of Ms. Leanna Greenwood and Ms. Whitney Puetz who is part of the intern program in collaboration between Emory's Rollins School of Public Health and Department of Community Health (DCH) and her position is also under the supervision of Ms. Leanna Greenwood.

Mr. Bhasin informed the Board the move to the Twin Tower is now complete and he believes this move is good and more cohesive in terms of being able to function with a lot of meeting space. He is hoping to be able to have the October board meeting in the new space.

Mr. Bhasin advised that for the 2023 Session there are several components he would touch on and then be open for questions.

He started with bill HB520, the follow up to HB1013 from last year. HB520 did not pass. The bill went well beyond what HB1013 as far as practitioners to report on the supply and distribution in Georgia. The bill also included a behavioral health loan repayment program to be administered by the Board.

Mr. Bhasin advised that he worked on SB238 with Senator Hodges, freshman senator, but SB238 was merged with HB520 which did not pass. He advised that it would be revisited later.

Mr. Bhasin stated that SB246 was signed, which will allow GBHCW to administer loan repayment for nurses that specifically serve in a faculty position. He advised that \$100,000 has been appropriated to do a statewide assessment of neurologists.

There was also \$240,00 for Morehouse School of Medicine to develop a rural OBGYN GME program. He also noted there is \$1.5 million for the physician's loan repayment program for a program with a longer commitment.

Mr. Bhasin advised that GBHCW is attempting to go digital and has gone live with DocuSign. He stated that any entity that is signing a contract with GBHCW will now sign DocuSign. He also advised that Ms. Greenwood and her team will also be going fully digital, as would the loan repayment applications, the Accredited Positions Report, the Graduate Medical Education month report submissions, and the annual verification for loan repayments and any remaining scholarships will all be digitalized.

Mr. Bhasin advised that a couple of test items that were administered which included the nursing grant contracts, had been signed by DocuSign. He stated that a lot of contracts had been signed and GBHCW is looking forward to administering those dollars when the schools submit their invoices and supporting data and requirements.

Mr. Bhasin stated that the Board was originally appropriated three million dollars for the nursing grants and that money went to the schools that scored on the top of the list. Dr. Clevenger, Mr.

Kemp, Dr. Indrakrishnan, and himself read and scored all the applications. He advised through the amended budget, an additional \$3.5 million was appropriated for the nursing grant program bringing the total allocation to \$6.5 million. He noted the awards were spread out geographically all around the state with over half going outside of Metro Atlanta.

Mr. Bhasin ended his report and Dr. McFadden opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Gautney inquired about the appropriations for rural physicians and how it was administered. Mr. Bhasin advised that they were waiting on the Governor to sign the funds into the budget, and then members of the board (volunteers) would be brought together to devise how to administer the funds.

Dr. McFadden then asked Mr. Bhasin to speak on the upcoming board elections for officers.

Mr. Bhasin advised that elections would be held in July. He stated there would need to be three board members on the nominating committee who would then work to devise a slate of officers for the Board.

Dr. McFadden asked for volunteers for the nominating committee.

Mr. Gautney, Dr. Indrakrishnan, Dr. Henson, and Dr. Smith volunteered to be on the nominating committee.

### **2nd Quarter FY2023 Program Projection Summary**

Mrs. Wilson started her report by giving her background and qualifications to the board. She then started her report on the FY2023 budget by giving an overview of expenditures through second Quarter.

Mr. Bhasin advised that GBHCW budget this fiscal year is about \$104 million. Mr. Bhasin advised that there is one dental loan that was not accepted. He acknowledged that Dr. Groover is working with GBHCW and the Georgia Dental Association attempting to get those dollars put into the hands of another dentist.

Mrs. Wilson concluded her report and Dr. McFadden opened the floor for any questions for Mrs. Wilson and Mr. Bhasin.

### **Georgia Physician Assistant Workforce Report**

Ms. Greenwood introduced Ms. Whitney Puetz, an intern from the Emory Rollins School of Public Health working with GBHCW this semester. She advised that Ms. Puetz would be giving the Physician Assistant Workforce report.

Ms. Puetz stated this report marks the 5<sup>th</sup> year the Board has examined the supply and distribution of Physician Assistants in Georgia. She reviewed the 13 bullet points of the executive summary.

Dr. Barber stated that he would be interested to see a comparison of the rate of Physician Assistants compared to the rate of change over time.

Dr. McFadden asked for a motion to publish the report.

**On Motion (Kemp/Henson)**, the Board unanimously approved to publish the Physician Assistant Workforce report.

### **Scholarship Default**

Mr. Bhasin reminded the Board they voted at the last meeting to place Dr. Abassi in default of her scholarship contract for not practicing in a county with a population of 50,000 or less. She received 1 scholarship award totaling \$20,000 and with default damages of \$40,000 she owes \$60,000. The Board also instructed staff to work with her regarding a repayment plan. Dr. Abassi submitted the following options for repayment Option A is \$500 a month for 10 years, and Option B is \$1,000 a month for five years. Mr. Bhasin advised once the Board approves a repayment plan, she would be offered a promissory note with the repayment guidelines that would start 90 days later.

Dr. McFadden asked if there was a motion regarding Dr. Abassi's repayment options.

**On Motion (Henson/Barber)**, the board unanimously accepted Option B requiring Dr. Abassi to repay \$1,000 a month for 5 years.

### **Presentations**

The Board heard three presentations from the following individuals:

1. Denise Kornegay, MSW, provided an update on the Statewide AHECs
2. Ruth Starling Ellis, MPH, JM, provided an update on School Based Planning Grants
3. Jean Sumner, MD and Marc Welsh, MPH, provided an update on the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Mercer School of Medicine Partnership

### **Old/New Business**

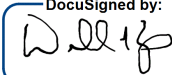
No new or old business.

**Adjournment**

Dr. McFadden stated there was no further business to be discussed and asked for a motion to adjourn.

**On Motion (Barber /Groover)**, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Respectively Submitted,

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Will Kemp, Secretary

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Chet Bhasin, Executive Director