

**Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce
Board Meeting Minutes
October 19, 2023**

Virtual

Dr. Barber, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. with the following board members present:

Chairman – James Barber, MD
Vice Chairman – William Kemp
Secretary/Treasurer – Lily Henson, MD
Terri McFadden, MD
Garrett Bennett, MD
Carolyn Clevenger, DNP
Steven Gautney, MSHA
Michael Groover, DMD
William Fricks, MD
Amy Reeves, PA-C
James Smith Jr, MD
Joseph Walker, MD
Kitty Carter-Walker, MD

Board Members Absent

Scott Bohlke, MD
Indran Indrakrishnan, MD

Staff Present

Chet Bhasin – Executive Director
Cherri Tucker – Consultant
Anita Dunbar – Office Coordinator
Yvette Speight – Legal Secretary
Leanna Greenwood – Data Team Manager
Augustine Agbontaen – Data Analyst
Sharon Wilson – Finance and Budget Manager
Kimberly Rogers – Finance and Data Admin Assistant
Alexandria Moses – Communications Coordinator

Consultant to the Board

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

Attorney General Representative

Jocelyn Curry, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General of Georgia

Guests Present

Marilane Bond, MD – Associate Dean of Medical Education, Emory University
Jean Sumner, MD- Dean, Mercer University School of Medicine
Betsy Bates –Bates Associates, Morehouse School of Medicine, and GA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Hugh Sosebee, JD – Vice President for External Relations, Mercer University
Scott Raines, CEO, Southeast Georgia Health System
Christy Jordan, General Counsel, Southeast Georgia Health System
Vanna Delorenzo, GME Coordinator, Southeast Georgia Health System
Martha Elks, MD, Morehouse School of Medicine
Merrilee Gober, RN, BSN, JD, Medical Association of Georgia
John Bucholtz, DO, Program Director, Piedmont Columbus Regional Family Medicine Residency
Becca Hallum, Associate General Counsel, Georgia Hospital Association
Brenda Reynolds, Patient Care Director/Institution Coordinator, Coffee Regional Medical Center
Vicki Lewis, MS, FACHE President & Chief Executive Officer, Coffee Regional Medical Center
Shelly Nuss, MD, Campus Dean/DIO, UGA/AU Medical Partnership, MEAC Chair
David Hess, MCG, Augusta University
Robert Lloyd, DO, Interim Dean, PCOM-South GA Campus
Natasha Savage, Medical College of Georgia /Augusta University
Chadburn Ray, MD, Medical College of Georgia, Associate Dean of Primary Care and Community Engagement
Jagdeep Singh, MD, St. Francis Emory Healthcare, Columbus
Cindy Armsdorf, Memorial Health University Medical Center
Margie Miller, Vice President of Government Relations, Augusta University

Approval of Agenda

Dr. Barber presented the meeting agenda for approval.

ON MOTION (Kemp/Smith), the Board unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Henson presented the meeting minutes for the July 20, 2023, meeting for review and approval.

ON MOTION (Smith/Kemp), the Board unanimously approved the April 20, 2023, meeting minutes as presented.

Dr. Henson presented the meeting minutes for the August 31, 2023, meeting for review and approval.

ON MOTION (GBHCW General Consent, Does not require second motion), August 31, 2023, board meeting minutes were approved as written. The vote on the motion is unanimously approved.

Introductions

Dr. Barber asked Miss Dunbar to conduct a roll call among board members, staff, and guest attendees.

Medical Education Advisory Committee (MEAC) Presentation

Dr. Shelley Nuss began her report by advising that MEAC has done extensive work with contracts and retention rates for the last two years. Those contracts are now done through DocuSign, which has sped up the process. Dr. Nuss stated that the committee has studied past retention rates and how the retention rates were set for who received the dollars and which areas the residents would practice.

Dr. Nuss advised that the State of Georgia has added new funding for graduate medical education programs. This new funding would help the state, new teaching hospitals, etc.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for any questions for Dr. Nuss. No questions were forthcoming.

Chairman's Report

Dr. Barber began his report by noting that the Governor and legislators are discussing rural and underserved healthcare. Dr. Barber advised that he shared a link stating that a national organization has ranked Georgia as having the worst health care in the United States.

Dr. Barber summarized that the board members and guests seek to help maximize the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce (GBHCW) limited resources and to show GBHCW's impact to the legislators and public.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Bhasin began his report by advising that the graduate medical education (GME) feasibility grant application is now open. He noted the applications for the four traditional loan repayment programs for Nurse Practitioners (NP), Physicians Assistants (PA), Dentists, and Physicians have also opened. He also stated applications for the newest physician loan repayment for four years at \$150K opened.

Mr. Bhasin reported that the nursing grant for nursing schools with additional capacity with wait lists totaled \$6.5M in the last fiscal year. He stated there is currently \$3M in the budget for FY2024. He noted in FY2023, the nursing schools could apply for \$750K. The amount has changed to \$500K this year.

Mr. Bhasin advised of another new loan repayment program has opened this year. The program is for full-time nurse faculty at qualifying institutions who have been in the role for the past year. He stated they could earn a \$25K/2-year sequence.

He advised for FY24, 99% of the contract agreements have been signed and fully executed. Mr. Bhasin reported that GBHCW has gone live with the new GME monthly reporting sites with no complications.

Mr. Bhasin reported that HB1013 was passed during the 2022 legislative session. Data is estimated to start flowing in 2024, but it will be gradual.

Mr. Bhasin ended his report by advising staff is processing FY23 loan repayment and contract payments and they would be getting those issued and closed ASAP.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for any questions for Mr. Bhasin. No questions were forthcoming.

Georgia Physician Education Loan Repayment Program Rules

Mr. Bhasin advised this subject was a carryover from the August 31, 2023, GBHCW board meeting. He advised of the changes regarding physicians actively treating Medicaid patients, a new program requiring a four-year commitment, and specific rules for a payoff schedule, and those changes were made with no objections from the Board. He advised that the Georgia Hospital Association had sent a letter of support to GBHCW.

Dr. Barber called for a motion to adopt the Georgia Physician Education Loan Repayment Program rules.

On Motion (McFadden/Smith), the Board unanimously approved the Georgia Physician Education Loan Repayment Program rules.

Budget Items

Mrs. Wilson began her budget report by advising this report reflects expenditures through August 31, 2023. She noted the report shows very few expenditures except for the Administration Budget and some contract encumbrances. She reported that FY23 invoices are currently being processed as they are received.

Mrs. Wilson noted the goal of the GBHCW budget section is to:

- Process all repayments and general invoices by November 1, 2023.
- Process and close out any GME, UME, and loan repayment program payments for 2023 by mid to end November.
- Finish processing and mailing checks to loan repayment lenders by the end of October.

Mrs. Wilson advised that there has been a delay in processing FY24 contracts due to switching to DocuSign and longer reviews by facilities due to changes made to the contracts in 2023. Mrs.

Wilson advised that Ms. Rogers, the new Budget and Data assistant, has helped with the changes and processing of loan payments.

Dr. Barber noted the bottom item is for physicians in rural areas and loan repayment programs for dentists, nurses, and physician assistants. Dr. Barber advised the budget line should be renamed since it covers more than just physicians.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for any questions for Mrs. Wilson. No questions were forthcoming.

GME Exit Survey Report

Mr. Agbontaen began his report on the 2023 GME Exit Survey, stating this report is the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce's 21st annual report of physicians graduating from Georgia's Graduate Medical Education programs. He advised the purpose of this survey is to inform medical education proponents, the community, and the state healthcare and healthcare workforce planners about the experiences of GME graduates and the supply and demand for new physicians in Georgia.

Mr. Agbontaen stated this survey offers insight into medical residents, demographic characteristics, compensation and debt level, retention rates, practice plans, assessments of the job markets, and training experiences.

Mr. Agbontaen advised in 2023, 800 GME graduates completed the GME exit survey. He reported the total number of GME graduates was 958. The actual completion rate is 83.5%.

Mr. Agbontaen reported:

- 50.6% of respondents identified as male, and 49.4 as female. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to complete a primary care or core specialty in 2023, which is 64.8% versus 52.2%.
- Female respondents comprised 50% or more of the respondents in the following primary care or core specialties:
 - Family Medicine 57.3%
 - OBGYN 92.0%
 - Psychiatry 56.3%
 - Pediatrics 68.2%

He continued his report with the following statistics:

- 72.6% of respondents are native US-born citizens, slightly higher than the 67.6% reported in 2022. 18.5% identified as African Americans, an increase of 17.2% in 2022. 7.9% identified as Hispanic, an increase from 5.9% in 2022.
- 27.3% of respondents graduated from high school in Georgia, slightly lower than the 28.8% reported last year. 7.0% plan to be in Georgia for their primary activity after completing their programs, which is a decrease of 2.9% points from last year.

- 15.6% of respondents have an Osteopathic degree, which is higher than the 10.5% of respondents last year. 25.9% attended medical school in Georgia, slightly higher than the 23.5% reported in 2022.
- 48.6% of respondents reported having \$200K or greater in educational debt. 29.4% report having no educational debt, which is lower than the 34.6% reported last year. 1% expected a salary starting at \$200K or less.

Next, Mr. Agbontaen touched on retention rates. He advised the primary care specialty with the highest percentage of respondents planning on staying in Georgia after graduation is internal medicine, with 41.0%. He reported that 67.0% of Georgia high school graduates plan to remain in Georgia next year. Lower than the 72.0% of respondents reported last year. 60.9% of those respondents who went to medical schools in Georgia plan to stay in Georgia next year, lower than the 71.4% of respondents reported in the previous year. He reported the most selected reason for leaving Georgia by respondents is proximity to the family at 25.0%.

Mr. Agbontaen advised 21.8% of respondents had a better job in their desired location, and 15.5% were locations outside of Georgia. He reported these are the same three top choices as last year. The average of respondents' overall assessment of practice opportunities in their specialty nationality is 3.8 on a scale where one is very few jobs, and five is many jobs. This is slightly lower than last year's average of 4.0.

Next, Mr. Agbontaen touched on Satisfaction and Training.

- The average response to this statement overall, I'm satisfied with the training I received, is 4.3 on a scale where one is very dissatisfied and five is very satisfied. This is slightly lower than the average of 4.4 reported last year.
- The average response to the statement I will choose to train at the same site again is 4.1 on a scale where one strongly disagrees and strongly agrees is five. This is lower than the average of 4.2 reported last year.
- Of the respondents, 24.9 % indicated they would consider practicing in an inner city, 28.2% in suburban areas, 26.1% in other areas within a large city, and 10.1% in small cities with a city population of less than 50,000.

Mr. Agbontaen ended his report, and Dr. Barber opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Barber advised the GBHCW to dig deeper into the percentages of residents who intend to stay in Georgia. He also stated it is disturbing that 41% of Internal Medicine graduates plan to remain in Georgia, but the lowest is General Surgery at 1.6%. Dr. Barber stated they should dig deeper into why General Surgery graduates do not want to stay in Georgia.

Dr. Smith requested Ms. Greenwood explain why people were leaving, as shown on the final tables.

Ms. Greenwood advised this question is similar year after year. The top three reasons were proximity to family, additional training, and better jobs in desired locations outside of Georgia.

Dr. Barber requested that Ms. Greenwood clarify what “better jobs in desired locations outside of Georgia” meant.

Ms. Greenwood advised that this could be a factor in where the survey takers are choosing their jobs, and for job-related considerations, they mentioned better jobs but did not give specifics. She reported that they did not mention much outside of that reason.

Dr. Dever spoke on adding to the survey by crosstabs with different specialties, age groups, and genders. He advised that the questions would be very valuable to be able to focus on a profile of getting more people to stay in Georgia (GA) or selecting GA programs by specialty.

Ms. Greenwood agreed that Dr. Dever had a good point and that that kind of analysis would lend itself to the GBHCW visualization online rather than doing the survey in a PDF report.

Mr. Kemp spoke on the financial aspect of the survey, how the GBHCW would need to share with the legislature, and how the loan repayments are impacted. He advised that younger employees equate better jobs with more pay. He stated in Table 9, 65% of the respondents will be in Table 9, and 65% acknowledge that they are coming out of school with \$100,000 or greater. table 11 shows what they expect to earn.

Dr. Barber agreed with Mr. Kemp’s analysis and stated more funding was needed.

Dr. Smith inquired about the data compilation of the survey. He inquired about additional questions that could be asked, such as what high schools and colleges the survey takers graduated from.

Ms. Greenwood advised that there might be a way to engineer specific questions to entail what a better job means to the applicants.

Dr. Carter-Wicks spoke about questions regarding working hours being factored into the survey questions.

Dr. Barber asked for a motion to accept and publish the data reports.

ON MOTION (Bohlke/Barber), the Board voted unanimously to accept and publish the data reports as presented.

Waiver Report

Mr. Bhasin reported that Dr. Nelms, a dentist in Athens, Clark County, has filed this petition for a waiver. He advised that she is not a current loan repayment applicant for the dentist or a previous recipient. Mr. Bhasin stated that she is attempting to ask the GBHCW to consider a variance. Dr. Nelms works at an FQHC out in that area and cites that between her loan amount and the compensation, that might that differ slightly from private practice. She is asking that we allow this waiver for her to be an applicant to the dentist in rural areas.

Mr. Bhasin advised that Dr. Nelms proposed an alternate formula in the meeting packet. He reported that if any board members would like to see her proposal, they could look further in the packet and see that she's proposing something that takes in income for the area and the population. This would allow us to administer the dollars differently.

Dr. Barber asked for a motion to approve or deny the waiver request.

On Motion (McFadden/Kemp), the Board voted by general consent to deny the Petition for Variance or Waiver of Rules submitted by Dr. Nelms.

Nursing Workforce Advisory Committee Update

Dr. Clevenger began her report advising the Nursing Workforce Advisory Committee (NWAC) is up and has selected members nominated in June. She advised members can be viewed in her report.

Dr. Clevenger that the committee spoke about how, in Georgia, there is a lot of discussion about the difference between licensed nurses' numbers and actively practicing nurses' numbers. She reported because a nursing license can be maintained for quite a while, you may or may not be practicing in the workforce.

advised there are other questions around multi-licensure than multi-state licenses and knowing where people practice. Dr. Clevenger spoke about the committee trying to get information on re-licensure surveys so that NWAC has something to work with. Dr. Clevenger advised the committee to meet every other month.

Dr Clevenger noted that most people may not know that the AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) has a nurse re-entry program. She advised Miss Denise Kornegay presented the history and data regarding their success in getting nurses back into practice.

Dr. Clevenger reported on the program for increased nursing graduates. She advised this program was new in 2022 and is a competitive grant program. She noted this grant is awarded to nursing schools with a waitlist. Dr. Clevenger advised this program has \$3M in the budget, and the grant is specifically for preparing people to be licensed as an LPN, LVN, and RN. She advised the applications are open with a deadline of January and winners to be announced in February or March.

Dr. Clevenger reported on the Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment program. She advised this program is new in 2023. This loan repayment program is for nurse faculty only in the University and Technical College systems; it is not for any of the private or other programs. It's up to \$25,000 to be paid out over two years. There is currently \$250,000 in the budget for this loan repayment program. This application is also open. She advised the deadline is in December.

Mr. Bhasin advised the institution's qualifications for this program allow certain not-for-profit institutions within Georgia to apply.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for any questions for Dr. Clevenger.

Dr. Henson inquired about people with licenses that are not necessarily in the workforce, and the other issue is the actual number of nurses in clinical nursing; practicing nursing as opposed to faculty or being in administrative roles or away from the bedside is a much more significant portion of those versus those who are at the bedside.

Dr. Clevenger advised Dr. Henson that NWAC does not know where nurses are practicing, so this should be a doctor's question and underscores how critical it will be to have that nursing re-license.

Dr. Barber inquired if there were any other questions for Dr. Clevenger. No questions were forthcoming.

GME Presentations

A. Coffee Regional

Dr. Lewis began her presentation by introducing herself and Ms. Reynolds. She advised Ms. Reynolds is the institutional coordinator for the Family Medicine residency program at Coffee Regional.

Dr. Lewis advised Coffee Regional is a sole community provider hospital, they are studying the financial impact of establishing a residency program. She advised that, with the help of their auditors, they made a PNL statement and were happy about the TPP, the program hospital-directed payment program,, but it was a hospital-directed payment program. The opportunities for teaching facilities but were very uncertain about how this might affect the DSH and provider tax payments.

Dr. Lewis advised looking at the first year of operation; Coffee Regional could nearly \$1M. Dr. Lewis spoke about looking at residents starting in the middle of 2025, beginning to have a margin in the second full year, and then being able to pay back the cumulative losses in year four. She advised Coffee Regional submitted an institutional accreditation application in June. She shared that on Friday, October 13th, the ACGME approved the family medicine institutional application, and the sponsoring institution application will follow.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for any questions for Dr. Lewis. No questions were forthcoming.

B. Southeast Georgia Health System

Mr. Raynes began his presentation by advising Southeast Georgia Health System (SGHS) serves the needs of residents in six counties in the southeast corner of Georgia: Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Glenn, McIntosh, and Wayne Counties. Mr. Raynes stated in this past year, SGHS engaged in germane solutions to do a feasibility study. Essentially, there were multiple board

meetings. A physician group and a task force were formed around this study. He spoke about the resident 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year medical students from the Medical College of Georgia who have been doing clinical rotations for 14 years. Mr. Raynes advised this also includes nursing students who do clinical rotations.

Mr. Raynes next reported that SGHS has appointed a designated institutional officer. Doctor Alan Brown, is the chief medical officer for SGHS. Mr. Raynes stated Dr. Brown is a Georgia resident trained in Georgia and has stayed in Georgia to reinforce the importance of keeping our talent at home. He also advised a Graduate Medical Education committee has been recruited and started to have quarterly meetings. In these sessions, he reported that SGHS has interviewed and selected a consulting partner specializing in ACGME application.

Mr. Raynes advised SGHS is in the process of completing its ACGME and institutional accreditation applications. The GME policies have been met and approved.

Dr. Barber opened the floor for questions for Mr. Raynes. No questions were forthcoming.

Old/New Business

There was no old or new Business identified to come before the Board.

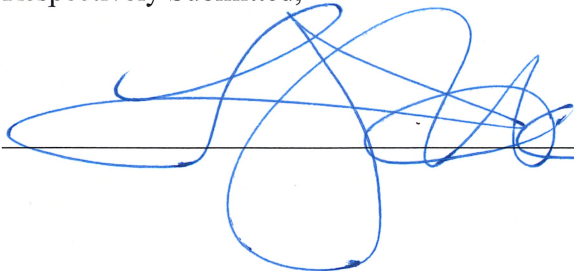
Adjournment

Dr. Barber informed the Board the next meeting would be held on January 25, 2024, at the Board's administrative office in Atlanta, GA.

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

On **Motion**, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn.

Respectively Submitted,



Lily Henson, MD, Secretary

Chet Bhasin

Chet Bhasin, Executive Director