

GEORGIA BOARD OF HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

Board Meeting Minutes

Date: July 24, 2025

Time: 8:00 AM – 11:15 AM

Location: Coffee Regional Medical Center, Douglas, GA

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 AM by Dr. James Barber, Chair.

II. Roll Call

Board Members Present:

- James Barber, M.D. – Chairman
- William “Will” Kemp – Vice Chairman
- Lily Henson, M.D. – Secretary/Treasurer
- Garrett Bennett, M.D.
- Carolyn Clevenger, DNP
- Steven Gautney, M.S.H.A.
- Michael Groover, D.M.D.
- Indran Indrakrishnan, M.D. (Virtual)
- Amy Reeves, PA-C
- Joseph Walker, M.D.
- William Fricks, M.D.
- Kitty Carter-Wicker, M.D. (Virtual)
- Terri McFadden, M.D.
- Cecil Bennett, M.D. (Remote)

Board Members Absent:

- James Lofton Smith, M.D.

Staff:

- Chet Bhasin
- Dr. Leanna Greenwood
- Augustine Agbontaen
- Lauren Brenneman
- Ashley Hambrick
- Briana Harris
- Freeman Montaque

- LePrissa Moore
- Alexandria Moses
- Cherri Tucker

Guests:

- Dr. Alan Dever, Board Consultant and Wellstar Kennestone Family Medicine Residency
- Jocelyn Curry – Attorney General Representative (Virtual)
- Senator Blake Tillery – Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee, Georgia Senate
- Representative Darlene Taylor – Chair, Health Sub-Committee, House Committee on Appropriations, Georgia House of Representatives
- Dr. Erica Sutton – Vice President, Academic Affairs, Wellstar Health System
- Vicki Lewis – President and CEO, Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Peggy Kirkland – Executive VP Human Resources & Organization Improvement, Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Ben Floyd – Vice President Operations, Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Jacqueline Nikpour – Assistant Professor Emory School of Nursing and Georgia Nursing Workforce Center
- Sarah Brown – Marketing and Public Relations, Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Lora Denton – Director IM Residency Program, Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Margie Miller – Vice President of Government Relations, Augusta University
- Jon Hoin – Senior Health Policy Manager, Georgia Dental Association
- Kamryn Wham – Georgia Hospital Association
- Terry Coleman – Coleman Consulting and Coffee Regional Medical Center
- Kerri Conley – Georgia Hospital Association
- Betsy Bates – Bates and Associates / Morehouse School of Medicine / GA Chapter of AAP
- Tony Paulk – Mayor, City of Douglas Georgia
- Lavonda Cravey, Vice President Corporate Revenue Cycle, Coffee Regional Medical Center

III. Approval of Agenda

Dr. Barber presented the agenda for review and approval. He stated if there were no changes, a motion to approve the agenda was required.

Motion to approve: Dr. McFadden

Second: Dr. Henson

The meeting agenda was approved by general consent.

IV. Approval of Previous Minutes

Dr. Henson presented the minutes from the April 24, 2025 Board meeting for review and approval. She stated if there were no changes, a motion to approve the agenda was required.

Motion to approve: Dr. Groover

Second: Ms. Reeves

The minutes of the April 24, 2025 meeting were approved by general consent.

V. Chair's Report – Dr. James Barber

Dr. Barber delivered his final report as Board Chair, giving a brief update on growing up Dunwoody and attending college in Atlanta, completing his residency training in Atlanta and explained how he ended up in Douglas Georgia. He stated he hoped everyone will leave with an increased understanding of how to improve rural health care and it is important that we make our best effort every day to make a difference on this planet. He continued his report by briefly reviewing the last two years to show how the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce making a difference.

- The finance team, led by Mr. Freeman Montague, does an outstanding job in managing the finances of the Board and processing payments for all areas. The growth in the loan repayment programs alone has greatly increased the workload for him and his team as they process payments for over 185 recipients a year. The program has now surpassed 1,000 recipients overall.
- New Dashboards were developed by our data team led by Dr. Leanna Greenwood for the NRMP annual match, GME, pain management, and optometry. Our data team has been repeatedly acknowledged as best practice with GDAC and was recently honored by the State Council of CIOs.
- The contracts team quickly implemented a new grant program for graduate medical education program development south of GA State Route 540 as well as implemented a much needed behavioral health loan repayment program. Thanks to Lauren Brenneman for all of her hard work on those endeavors.
- The communications team, led by Mrs. Alex Dave-Moses, reinstated our practice opportunity fairs which we shut down during COVID. She has been instrumental in increasing our social media presence and website impact, and I encourage all of you to follow us on LinkedIn, etc. She also started a quarterly newsletter distributed to our stakeholders and we are excited to see several key legislative wins which help us in our mission which is to identify and address health care workforce needs with an emphasis on underserved communities.
- Legislative wins include SB 130 which allows final year residents and fellows to apply for loan repayment programs, so we hope to capture them before they are recruited somewhere else, SB 246 established a nurse faculty loan repayment program for addressing the nursing shortage, and SB 480 which established the behavioral health loan repayment program.
- Thanks to the Governor, the General Assembly and the Office of Planning and Budget the Board's budget has almost doubled to \$165,000,000 for FY2025. I believe this reflect the confidence the Governor and others have in our work.
- I am very proud of the leadership and the hard work of our Executive Director, Mr. Chet Bhasin and of Ms. Cherri Tucker, two people that work really hard for this Board.

- I am also very proud of our executive committee and the work they have done, and I want to say a special thank you to Mr. Will Kemp, Dr. Lily Henson and Dr. Terry McFadden.
- Thank you to all of the Board members for your work on the Board and supporting the Board's mission and initiatives.

Dr. Barber ended his report by saying thank you all, Board and staff, for your hard work toward these accomplishments. I know each of you is proud of the work that we do. Isn't it great to work on a problem which is so obvious and so impactful? So, thank you all for your hard work. And now, let's get to work.

VI. Executive Director's Report – Mr. Chet Bhasin

Mr. Bhasin began his report by thanking Ms. Lewis and her team for the warm welcome and allowing us to meet at her hospital. He also thanked board members, staff and guests for traveling to Douglas for the meeting.

Mr. Bhasin reviewed key updates on the legislative session as well as other updates for the agency. Updates include:

- The Governor signed Senate Bill 130 into law which added physicians in residency as well as fellows to the providers allowed under the loan repayments. The bill also revised language under O.C.G.A. 31-7-95 relating to funding of medical education provided by hospital authorities and designated teaching hospitals.
- The majority of GME Agreements have been sent out and quite a few have been fully executed. The portal for the grant programs will be opened soon starting with the Nursing School Grant. Ms. Breneman and Ms. Dave-Moses have revised the loan repayment applications and will be updating that later in the meeting.
- The data-sharing initiatives with the various licensing boards per HB 1013.
- FY 2026 budget as passed included funding for 150 new GME slots, fellowships, and nursing school support.
- The loan repayment program's budgetary name was rebranded from Physicians for Rural Areas Assistance to Healthcare Practitioner Loan Repayment Program to align more with the widening of the net of the different licensures that we deal with.
- Progress on resolving legacy medical school scholarship cases.
- Recruitment updates for staff vacancies.

Mr. Bhasin ended his report by recognizing Dr. Barber for his term as Chairman of the Board.

VII. Wellstar GME Update – Dr. Erica Sutton

Dr. Sutton, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Wellstar, presented on Wellstar’s graduate medical education expansion. She reviewed the development of a new internal medicine residency at Paulding Medical Center that will have 30 residents when the ramp-up period is over. She stated the system is considering adding additional fellowships in neurology, cardiology, and pediatric hospital medicine. Dr. Sutton continued her report saying the system has just under 300 residents total with the newest program at Spalding Regional, an internal medicine program, just recently graduated its first class.

Dr. Barber asked the Board if there were questions for Dr. Sutton and several board members had questions.

The Board Chair thanked Dr. Sutton for her presentation.

Prior to introducing the next speaker, Senator Blake Tillery, Dr. Barber and Mr. Bhasin informed the Board on the grant program for GME development below State Route 540 which Senator Tillery was instrumental in getting the funding in the Board’s budget for the grant program. They informed the Board there were 13 different specialties in the various applications received and the total applications represented 400 net-new resident slots. Mr. Bhasin stated if we were able to get another grant program funded for the North, East or West side of the state that 800 slots could balloon up quickly. There were approximately 10 winners, and the specialties were internal medicine, family medicine, OB/GYN, and Psychiatry. With the \$20 million in funding available, that will yield about 120 new slots.

Mr. Bhasin stated he has been looking at data regarding GME and Florida is a good state to look at. Florida’s population is about triple the size of Georgia’s population and their GME count is also about triple the size of Georgia’s. Florida’s GME is mainly within the HCA healthcare system which has about 2,800 slots alone. Georgia has about 3,600 GME slots. He continued saying with Wellstar and all the 540 grant winners collectively, we can do great work in increasing GME slots in Georgia.

VIII. Legislative Update – Senator Blake Tillery

Senator Tillery welcomed everyone to the 19th Senate District that he has represented for the last 9 years and provided remarks on:

- Recruitment and retention of healthcare providers, especially in rural areas. He stated the way to get providers to the rural areas is to “grow your own” because it is hard to convince a new provider from a large area to settle in small town Georgia.
- Importance of residency and fellowship programs in retaining graduates in Georgia.
- Legislative priorities for sustaining rural hospitals and addressing changing workforce needs.

- Opportunities for federal matching of state funds for greater program impact.

The Board Chair thanked Senator Tillery for taking the time to speak to the Board.

IX. Board Governance Matters – Dr. Terri McFadden

Dr. McFadden presented the slate of names for the offices of the Board. Ballots were included in the Board packets and collected by staff for tabulation once ballots had been marked.

Dr. McFadden announced the results and made a motion to approve the slate of officers.

Chair: Mr. William “Will” Kemp – 13 votes

Vice Chair: Dr. Lily Henson – 13 votes

Secretary/Treasurer: Mr. Steven Gautney – 13 votes

Motion to Approve: Dr. McFadden

Second: Dr. Reeves

The slate of officers was approved by unanimous consent.

X. Data Presentations

Ms. LePrissa Moore presented the 2025 Dental Hygienist Workforce Report and the 2025 Dental Workforce Report.

She first reported on the 2025 Dental Hygienist Workforce Report. Highlights from the report include:

- In 2025, Georgia had 7,330 actively practicing dental hygienists.
- Thirteen counties in Georgia had no practicing dental hygienists affecting a combined population of approximately 77,458 residents.
- The average age of respondents actively practicing dental hygiene in Georgia is 42.
- The largest age group consists of respondents aged 35-49, representing 46% of the workforce.
- The smallest group is aged 65 and older and account for 2.3% of respondents.
- 97.9% of respondents identified as female and 2.1% of respondents identified as male.
- In 2025 64.9% of respondents reported working 30 hours or more per week, while 35.1% of respondents reported working less than 30 hours per week.
- In 2025, 86.5% of respondents reported working in a General Dentistry Office.

Ms. Moore next presented an overview of the Dentist Workforce in Georgia for 2025. Highlights from the report include:

- In 2025, Georgia had 5,704 actively practicing dentists.

- Twenty-one counties in Georgia had no practicing dentists affecting a combined population of approximately 164,375 residents.
- In 2025 4,626 respondents reported their age with the average age of practicing dentists being 46.
- The largest age group of respondents is 35-49 at 42% while the smallest age group, 60-64 represents 6.6% of respondents.
- Of the 5,143 respondents reporting gender, 63.4% identified as male and 36.6% of respondents identified as female.
- Of the 5,139 respondents reporting work hours 79.4% reported working 30 hours or more per week, while 20.6% reported working fewer than 30 hours per week.
- Of the 5,154 respondents reporting type of practice, 75.6% reported working in General Dentistry.

Dr. Leanna Greenwood presented the Dentistry Dashboard Overview by showing the Board how to navigate through the dashboard.

Ms. Briana Harris provided an overview of the 2025 Medical School Graduate Survey Report. Highlights for the report include:

- The GBHCW has conducted an annual survey of graduating medical students from each of Georgia's medical schools since 2008.
- For 2025, 77.7% of graduates completed the survey (625 of 804 Grads). The completion rate of each medical school is:
 - Emory University School of Medicine (Emory) – 87.0% (124 of 143 Grads).
 - Medical College of GA at Augusta University (MCG) – 46.9% (115 of 245 Grads).
 - Mercer University School of Medicine (Mercer) – 97.8% (136 of 139 Grads).
 - Morehouse School of Medicine (Morehouse) – 88.3% (83 of 94 Grads).
 - Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine – Georgia (PCOM) 91.3% (167 of 183 Grads).
- For 2025, 58.1% of survey completers are female. Emory had the highest percentage of female respondents (71.0%) and PCOM had the lowest percentage of female respondents (50.3%).
- The average number of respondents is 28.1 years old. The youngest respondent is 23 years old and the oldest respondent is 47.
- 66.7% of respondents intend to locate their practice in an underserved area or with an underserved population.
- 401 respondents (64.2%) answered that Georgia is the likely state for their practice after residency.

- 53.8% (336) of respondents intend to practice in a primary care / core specialty after training. Of these, 232 (69.0%) plan to practice in Georgia.

After discussion, Dr. Barber called for a motion to approve the reports for publication.

Motion to Approve: Dr. Fricks

Second: Dr. Bennett

The Board voted unanimously to approve the publication of the workforce reports.

XI. Financial Update – Mr. Freeman Montaque

Mr. Montaque provided information on the year-end budget for 2025. He also reviewed the FY2026 appropriations of the Board noting the total budget for FY2026 is \$134,560,139.

XII. Contracts, Loan Repayment, and Application Updates

Ms. Lauren Brenneman and Ms. Alexandria Dave-Moses reported on contract program status and loan repayment program updates.

XIII. Old Business / New Business

No additional business was presented.

XIV. Adjournment


Dr. Barber informed the Board the next meeting will be a virtual meeting on October 30, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to Adjourn: Dr. Henson

Second: Dr. Carter-Wicker

The Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Secretary-Treasurer

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Executive Director