

NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF MEDICINE

November 2020 News Blast

North Dakota Board of Medicine

4204 Boulder Ridge Rd Ste 260

Bismarck, ND 58503

(701) 450-4060

2021 Meeting Schedule

February 19, 2021

May 21, 2021

August 20, 2021

November 19, 2021

A LETTER FROM THE ND PROFESSIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM

2020 had been a stressful year for everyone, but especially for the medical community. Medical providers are working on the front lines in the midst of a pandemic that they were not trained to manage. The number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise and in many cases the expectations and responsibilities placed on these medical providers also continue to rise. Providers are exhausted but every day are asked to do more with less support. Burnout numbers were high pre-pandemic, and they are likely skyrocketing mid-pandemic. Nobody knows what they will look like post-pandemic because many of us can't even see that far ahead. To add to the stress, we are faced with social isolation, anxiety about the health of loved ones and the wellbeing of our children and grandchildren.

During this time of increased stress, it is important to stay connected to support and to avoid use of substances including alcohol and prescription drugs as well as other substances of abuse. These may provide temporary relief but also contribute to the already elevated stress and exhaustion. The North Dakota Professional Health Program (NDPHP) is here to provide support to medical providers in North Dakota who are struggling with

burnout as well as mental illness and substance use disorders. We are a necessary resource to help make sure that the medical providers in North Dakota are able to take care of themselves during this time of added stress and fatigue so that they can continue to provide the best medical care to the residents of North Dakota. For more information, or to contact the NDPHP, please visit our website: [North Dakota Professional Health Program \(ndphp.org\)](http://ndphp.org) or call (701) 751-5090.

Sincerely, Dr. Melissa Henke, Medical Director, and Ann Leiseth, Executive Director.

November Meeting Highlights

At our November 20, 2020 meeting our Board approved 129 physician licenses, 2 resident licenses, 16 Physician Assistant licenses, and 9 Genetic Counselor licenses. The Board received a report that 19 Letters of Qualifications for State of Principal Licensure and 121 non-principal licenses were issued through the Interstate Medical Licensing Compact. As of November 16, 2020, a total of 466 licenses were issued through the compact. The Board interviewed one applicant for licensure. The Board received reports from Investigative Panel A and Investigative Panel B regarding the number of complaints reviewed and acted upon. The combined reports showed that a total of 41 cases were reviewed; 22 cases were dismissed; 5 cases were dismissed with a confidential letter of concern; 2 cases were referred for formal action; 9 cases were held over for further review and 1 stipulation resolving formal action were approved. The Board issued 3 Orders of Completion for disciplinary cases meeting required rehabilitation.

The Board received a report from the North Dakota Professional Health Program regarding the number of active participants in their program and were pleased to receive reports of 7 participants who were closed out of the programs.

The Board discussed the upcoming Legislative Session which will begin January of 2021. The Board will not be submitting any bills this session but will be closely monitoring any bills affecting the physicians, physician assistants, and genetic counselors. A committee was appointed to review any such bills and provide feedback, information, and necessary testimony on behalf of the Board.

The Board also convened a committee to review the personal disclosure questions being asked on applications and renewals and the internal policies and procedures on regarding disclosures.

Finally, the Board reviewed its meeting schedules for next year and determined it would move to quarterly meetings. Depending on the COVID, the Board is hoping to move back to in-person meetings for two of the meetings but will otherwise hold meetings via Zoom. Anyone can attend the full Board meetings – information on how to join via Zoom will be available on agendas that are posted two weeks prior to the meeting.

NEWS

The Board Welcomes a new Executive Director

After three years of serving as the Executive Director for the Board of Medicine, Bonnie Storbakken is leaving the office and will be sworn in as the new Judge for the South Central District Court on January 5, 2021. The Board wishes Ms. Storbakken well and sends its thanks for the hard work and dedication she showed this office.

Sandra DePountis, JD, joined the Board on Oct. 1, 2020, as the new Executive Director. Ms. DePountis obtained her Juris Doctorate from the University of North Dakota School of Law in 2010. She worked in private practice for two years thereafter before joining the Office of Attorney General in 2012. As an Assistant Attorney General, Ms. DePountis was general counsel to several licensing and regulatory boards, so looks forward to bringing her skills and experience to the North Dakota Board of Medicine.

Reminders Relating to COVID-19

Governor Burgum has issued several executive orders since North Dakota confirmed the first case of COVID-19 within the state. Executive Order 2020-05.1, which can be found at the bottom of this news blast, allows out of state providers to provide care within North Dakota if authorized by the North Dakota Department of Health. Applications and more information can be found at their website: <https://www.health.nd.gov/>. Questions regarding the process and authorization to work under this alternative pathway should be directed to the Department of Health via email at dohlicensure@nd.gov or by phone at (866)-207-2880.

Please note: There have been no other statutory or rule changes regarding licensure, renewals, CME requirements etc. As such, our office is operating under the same structure we always have. Our office is following recommendations of social distancing and is working mostly remotely during this time. All staff are available via telephone and email. We thank you all for your understanding and patience as we move through this period of uncertainty. We also thank you all for your expertise and efforts in treating patients with COVID-19.

Informational Links:

CDC's Clinical Pocket Guide to Tapering Opioids:

https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/clinical_pocket_guide_tapering-a.pdf

Interstate Medical Licensing Compact: <https://www.imlcc.org>

Executive Order 2020-05.1:

<https://www.governor.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/executive-orders/Executive%20Order%202020-05.01.pdf>