

Therapeutic Cannabis Medical Oversight Board

January 5, 2022, DHHS Offices, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord (with Remote-Zoom option)

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Virginia Brack, Heather Brown, Corey Burchman, Jerry Knirk (Chair), Richard Morse, Seddon Savage, Lisa Withrow

Members Absent: Jonathan Ballard, Jill MacGregor, Molly Rossignol, Cornel Stanciu

DHHS Staff: Michael Holt, DPHS Program Administrator

Note: In-person quorum not met

Meeting Convened

Brown (alternate chair) convened the meeting as Co-Chair at 5:44.

- Knirk (chair) was en route from the Legislature
- Because there was not an in-person quorum, the Board could not vote on anything, but could discuss issues and suggested we come up with consensus where we can to vote on at the next in-person meeting.

Minutes

Minutes from previous meeting were reviewed without additions or corrections suggested.

Chairperson and Membership

Board membership vacancies and assignments were reviewed

Vacancies include: ObGyn and Palliative Care

- Palliative Care / Oncologist
 - Withrow fills the oncology slot based on oncology experience, but would more naturally fill the palliative care slot if an oncologist could be identified.
 - Withrow will reach out to oncologists she knows to see if she can identify someone with interest.
 - Savage will reach out to Kathleen Broglio to see if she knows any oncologists interested in serving.
- Ob/Gyn
 - It was suggested that Nadine Hottat, a women's health nurse practitioner who has testified to the MOB, might have interest. Holt will reach out to her.
 - Dr. Chadury, chief of ObGyn at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Concord was suggested as a possibility. Brack does not know him, but is willing to reach out.

Discussion regarding the Chair and co-Chair positions which, per Board Agreement, require reappointment by the Board every 2 years.

- Volunteers and nominees
 - Knirk indicated his willingness to continue as Chair in an email to the Board and reiterated this upon arrival to the meeting. He noted that he was open to someone else serving as Chair.
 - Heather voiced willingness to serve as co-Chair or to move to Chair

- Both were complimented on their leadership skills and service.
- No other members present voiced interest in serving
- The question was raised whether the Chair should be a clinical person given that the charge of the Board is medical advisory.
 - It was noted that there was no statutory requirement for clinical leadership
 - All members of the Board have equal votes, roles, and opportunities for leadership
 - This led to discussion of the charge of the MOB

Discussion re: charge of the MOB

- It was noted the role of the Board by statute is to “monitor and contribute to the oversight of the clinical, quality, and public health related matters of the use of cannabis for therapeutic purposes.”
 - It was noted that MOB activities associated with this charge (preparing education, evidence reviews on proposed [and current] qualifying medical conditions/symptoms, considering relevant legislation, etc) has taken up much of the Board’s time and focus.
 - The goals of making the program more user friendly, while related, is somewhat different and might be more effectively addressed with more input from patients and caregivers, rather than clinicians.
 - If this is a key function of the MOB, having a single patient on the board could be seen as tokenism and inadequate
 - The possibility of having a patient advisory board to more fully address these issues with undiluted focus was raised.
 - It was noted that no precedents for patient advisory groups for government health programs such as this were known.
 - The group agreed having a TCP patient on the MOB was critical to ground clinician members in patient needs and experiences.
 - Earlier a suggestion was made to add a caregiver to the MOB. But the timing of this suggestion was not adequate to address it during the current legislative session. The group agreed to return to it going forward.

2021 Annual Report

The 2021 Annual Report was presented to the Board in an unformatted version, but the Board was asked to consider the report’s content. Board members did not have any comment on the report presented.

HB 1619

Seeks to make **moderate to severe chronic migraine headaches** a qualifying medical condition for cannabis certification.

- Rep. Suzanne Vail, the bill’s sponsor, noted that the genesis of this bill was a patient who felt stigmatized by having to check a box saying she has chronic pain. And there

was concern that doctors may not recognize migraine as a form of chronic pain syndrome.

- It was noted the IASP/ICD-11 definition of chronic pain is “pain that persists or recurs pain for longer than three months” and
 - Based on this it was suggested that instead of naming migraine as a separate condition, which would require extensive Board research and approval of migraine as a condition, that we specify the definition and note migraine as an example of recurrent pain.
 - It was noted, if specifying migraine and/or other conditions, Board may need to also state “including, but not limited to” lest an intermittent condition’s absence on the list lead to exclusion by potential certifiers. (eg, “it’s not on the list”)
- The Board agreed migraine is already covered in the statute based on the IASP/ICD-11 definition of chronic pain (which includes pain that “persists or recurs”). However, the statute/bill does not currently define chronic pain. The Board considered recommending amending the statute to include “chronic pain, whether recurrent or persistent,” but not include the three month component of the IASP/ICD-11 definition or examples of intermittent/recurrent pain conditions.
- Rep. Vail was asked about the intent of her bill and whether she wanted this amendment, or if she preferred the bill as is, which would add the specific named condition of migraines. Rep. Vail said that she preferred the bill as is with the named condition.
- Knirk will present this discussion to the House Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee when the bill has its public hearing.
 - Members expressed a strong opinion that the board’s position on this bill was not neutral, and the full discussion should be presented to the committee.
 - Also, it was noted that there was no formal vote on a board position due to lack of in-person quorum.

Review of Cannabis 101 slides

- The group went through the updated/formatted slide deck and made a number of revisions.
- Savage would work with Rossignol on updated OUD slides before the next meeting
- Brown and Withrow would work on developing one or two slides to be considered by the Board at their next meeting, which would present a summary of effectiveness from data or interviews with the ATCs.

Remaining Agenda Items

The following agenda items were not discussed due to time constraints:

- Discussion of the Listening Session from December 2021
- Member Updates
- Public Comments

Meeting adjourned at 7:45.