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ADVISORY BOARD ON SURGICAL ASSISTING

Minutes

June 20, 2023

The Advisory Board on Surgical Assisting met on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at the Department of Health Professions, Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Wilhelm, LSA Chair [Joined at 10:30 am]
Thomas Gochenour, CSA Vice-Chair
Deborah Redmond, CSA
Nicole Meredith, RN

MEMBERS ABSENT: Srikanth Mahavadi, MD

STAFF PRESENT: William L. Harp, M.D., Executive Director [Joined at 10:39 am]
Michael Sobowale, LLM, Deputy Director, Licensure
Erin Barret, JD, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Jennifer Deschenes, Deputy Director for Discipline
Brent Saunders, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Colanthia Morton Opher, Deputy Director for Administration
Roslyn Nickens, Licensing Supervisor
Joshlynn Jones, License Specialist

GUESTS PRESENT: Vanessa Stannermann, AST
Lisa Day, VCCS
Thea Franke, Fortis College
Hunter Jamerson, Esq.
Brittany Toth, CST

Call to Order

Thomas Gochenour called the meeting to order @ 10:22 a.m.

Emergency Egress Procedures

Jennifer Deschenes announced the emergency egress instructions.

Roll Call

Roslyn Nickens called the roll; a quorum was declared.

Approval of Minutes

Nicole Meredith motioned to approve the minutes of the February 13, 2023, meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Deborah Redmond and carried unanimously.

Adoption of Agenda

Nicole Meredith motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Deborah Redmond and carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Vanessa Stannermann spoke in opposition of NCCT being an acceptable credential for the Board of Medicine.

Lisa Day spoke in opposition of NCCT being an acceptable credential for the Board of Medicine.

Hunter Jamerson stated the original intent of HB2222 was to create a provisional pathway to allow surgical assistants to enter the workforce pending passing the certification exam. He stated that in the 2013 sunrise study for credentialing of surgical technologists in the state, NBSTSA was the first to be recognized as the only pathway to certification. Currently, other states recognize CAHEP and I.PASS accredited education.

Brittany Toth spoke in opposition of NCCT being an acceptable credential for the Board of Medicine.

New Business

1. Report on Status of Regulatory /Policy Actions

Erin Barrett reviewed the status of the regulatory actions for the Advisory. She noted that, hopefully, the proposed regulations would move forth this summer.

2. Consider Recommendation of Approved Surgical Technologist Training Programs

Erin Barrett directed the advisory board's attention to HB2222, passed into law in the 2023 General Assembly Session. This legislation added new credentialing pathways that the Board of Medicine can accept for certification of applicants to practice as a surgical technologist in Virginia. Several new pathways were added, including Board approval of accrediting entities. The National Center for Competency Testing (NCCT) requested approval by the Board as an accrediting entity under this pathway. The advisory board reviewed letters of support and associated documents received from various stakeholders in support of NCCT's proposal to be recognized Board as an accredited credentialing organization for certification of surgical technologists. Ms. Barrett advised the advisory board can either make a recommendation to the full Board

of Medicine for approval or recommend that the Board not accept NCCT as a credentialing organization. Brent Saunders, Board Counsel, advised that in its deliberations, the advisory should focus more on what the actual program core requirements are.

After a lengthy discussion, Thomas Gochenour moved that the advisory should recommend that the Board not accept NCCT as a recognized credentialing organization. Motion was seconded by Deborah Redmond. Three members voted in favor of the motion, with one abstention. The motion passed.

3. Discuss Surgical Technologist Accredited Program Requirements and Apprenticeships

Members discussed accreditation and apprenticeships for surgical technologists. Jessica Wilhelm stated that there is a difference between apprenticeships and clinical training. Apprentices do not receive their clinical training while they are a student. They have to seek employment after getting their didactic education and the employers have to be the ones to provide clinical, hands-on training. Ms. Barrett advised the advisory board that there may be many types of suitable training programs. Nicole Meredith asked if discussion could be tabled.

4. Discuss Regulations for Reactivation of Inactive Licensure

Jessica Wilhelm stated this agenda item was satisfactorily addressed by Erin Barrett when giving her report on pending regulatory actions for the advisory and no other discussion was needed.

5. Discuss Licensure Requirements for Temporary Traveling Surgical Assistants

Jessica Wilhelm inquired about the requirements for the Board to issue a temporary license. Dr. Harp stated that the Board of Medicine does not issue a paper license for 90-day temporary license. Erin Barrett stated that if a practitioner is licensed or authorized to practice as a surgical technologist in another state prior to being contracted or receiving an offer of employment from an eligible employer, the employer is still required to verify that the license in the other state is in good standing prior to being able to practice in Virginia.

6. Discussion Practice Prior to Licensure for Surgical Assistant

Jessica Wilhelm inquired as to timeline when a person/applicant can begin practicing as a licensed surgical assistant prior to licensure by the Board of Medicine. Michael Sobowale responded that a new graduate can begin practicing as a surgical assistant with the title, "surgical assistant license applicant" while waiting for passage of the NBSTSA or NCCSA certification examination and until licensed, not to exceed six months from the date of graduation. If they fail the examination, they would need to stop practicing.

Announcements

Roslyn Nickens provided the following licensure totals for surgical assistants and surgical technologists:

Licensed Surgical Assistant	Surgical Technologist
Current Active in Virginia 588	Current Active in Virginia 1500
Current Active out of State 144	Current Active out of State 631
Total 712	Total 2131

Licensure totals from January 1, 2023, to June 20, 2023.

Licensed Surgical Assistant	Surgical Technologist
76	354

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 10, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

With no other business to conduct, Jessica Wilhelm adjourned the meeting @ 11:46 a.m.