BOARD FOR HEARING AID SPECIALISTS AND OPTICIANS
MINUTES OF MEETING

The Board for Hearing Aid Specialists and Opticians met on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at the Offices of the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, Perimeter Center, Board Room 2, 2nd Floor, 9960 Mayland Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23233.

Board members present for the meeting:

Judith Canty
LeighAnna Morris, AuD
Kenneth Kirk, Ph.D
Holly Law
Jacqueline Kowal
Desire'e Lewis-Nelson
Jennifer Mundorff, AuD
Nikisha Richards-Walker, MD
Frances Lunsford
Michael Armstrong, MD

Board members not present for the meeting:

Darla All
Fitim Xhemaili
Jeffrey Grappone
Maureen Sadak
Debra Ogilvie, AuD

DPOR staff present for all, or part of the meeting included:

Laura McClintock, Director
Stephen Kirschner, Director Licensing and Regulatory Programs
Tamika Rodriguez, Regulatory Operations Administrator
Heather Garnett, Licensing Operations Administrator
Camryn Fried, Administrative Coordinator
Joseph Haughwout, Regulatory Affairs Manager

A representative from the Office of the Attorney General was present at the meeting.

A Board for Professional and Occupational Regulation liaison was not present at the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Canty determined a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

Ms. Canty read the mission statement of the Department of Professional & Occupational Regulations and announced several meeting reminders.

EMERGENCY EGRESS

Tamika Rodriguez, Regulatory Operations Administrator, explained the emergency egress procedure for board room 2.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Board took the agenda into consideration.

Dr. Mundorff motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Dr. Morris.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board took the minutes from the Board meeting on May 6, 2026, under consideration.

Dr. Mundorff motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Lewis-Nelson.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

REPORTS

Licensing Statistics

Ms. Garnett presented the licensing statistics that were provided in the electronic agenda and announced recent staffing changes.

Examination Statistics

Ms. Garnett presented the examination statistics that were provided in the electronic agenda.

9:40 a.m. Arrival of Board Member Dr. Richards-Walker

Regulatory Report

Ms. Rodriguez presented the current regulatory actions that were provided in the electronic agenda.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Rodriguez presented the executive directors' report, which was provided in the electronic agenda.

REGULATORY ACTION AND BOARD GUIDANCE

Hearing Aid Specialists Training and Work Permits

Ms. Rodriguez informed the Board that the General Assembly approved House Bill 1254, amending the HAS regulations to implement training and work permit requirements. At the May 6, 2026, Board meeting, the Board approved staff to initiate changes and develop language for the temporary permit, transitioning to a training permit and establishing a work permit.

Mr. Haughwout presented the proposed language for the Hearing Aid Specialist training and work permits.

Board members and staff discussed the presented language with amendments and to add a definition for direct supervision.

Dr. Morris moved to initiate a NOIRA regarding training and work permit requirements as amended, seconded by Dr. Armstrong.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Dr. Richards-Walker, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

ABO Exam Fee Increase

Ms. Rodriguez presented the Board with a notification that DPOR received from the American Board of Opticianry (ABO) and National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc (NCLE) regarding their intent to increase the exam fee starting October 1, 2026.

Dr. Mundorff motioned to approve the exam fee increase effective October 1, 2026, seconded by Ms. Law.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Dr. Richards-Walker, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

ABO-NCLE Contract Renewal

Ms. Rodriguez informed the Board the current examination contract with the American Board of Opticianry (ABO) and National Contact Lens Examiners, Inc (NCLE) is in the renewal period.

Ms. Lunsford motioned to renew the existing contract with the ABO and NCLE, seconded by Ms. Kowal.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Dr. Richards-Walker, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

Qualifications for Licensure- Military Training and Education

Mr. Kirschner informed the Board of § 54.1-118. (Qualifications for licensure, etc.; substantially equivalent military training and education). Mr. Kirschner suggested amending 18 VAC-80-20-30.4 to add six months of documented experience as an audiologist or equivalent military occupational specialty in the United States Armed Services.

The Board discussed the military training for Hearing Aid Specialists and determined it not substantially equivalent military training and agreed by consensus not to add the language to the regulations.

Mr. Kirschner suggested amending 18 VAC 80-30-20.5 to expand qualifying education requirements for military veterans to include completion of a Commission on Opticianry Accreditation (COA) training program during their service; or two years of experience as an optical specialist, optician, or equivalent military occupational specialty in the United States Armed Services.

The Board discussed the military training for Opticians and agreed the military training is equivalent to current requirements.

Ms. Lewis- Nelson motioned to incorporate the proposed amendments to the provision for examination eligibility for individuals with experience in the Armed Services, as presented, and to authorize staff to proceed with filing the fast-track regulation, seconded by Ms. Lunsford.

The members voting 'Aye' were Ms. Canty, Dr. Morris, Dr. Kirk, Ms. Law, Ms. Kowal, Dr. Richards-Walker, Ms. Lewis-Nelson, Ms. Lunsford, Dr. Armstrong, and Dr. Mundorff.

There were no negative votes. The motion carried.

Recess at 10:50 a.m.

BOARD MEMBER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Kirschner presented the Board Member Professional Development presentation and informed the Board Members of their roles and responsibilities.

REMINDERS

Next Board Meeting

Ms. Canty reminded the Board of the next scheduled Board meeting on October 28, 2026, and Board member training on-site at DPOR for October 22 and 23, 2026.

Adjourn

There being no further business brought before the Board, Ms. Canty adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

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Darla All, Board Chair

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Laura McClintock, Board Secretary