



DRAFT
Virginia Board of Counseling
Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, October 9, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.
9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, VA 23233
Board Room 2

PRESIDING OFFICER: Gerard Lawson, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, Chairperson

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Anastasiou, LMFT (*arrived at 10:18 am*)
L. Paul Bernard, Ph.D., LPC
Marlo Burdge, Citizen Member (*arrived at 10:06 a.m.*)
Luanne Griffin, LPC
Charlotte Markva, LPC, LMFT, CSAC
Matthew Scott, LMFT
Terry Tinsley, PhD, LPC, LMFT, NCC, CSOTP
Cyrus Williams, Ph.D., LPC, LSATP, Vice-Chairperson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Benjamin Allison, Citizen Member
Nakeisha Gordon, LPC
Shannon Kuschel, Ph.D., LPC

BOARD COUNSEL PRESENT: Erin Weaver, JD, Assistant Attorney General

BOARD STAFF PRESENT: Latasha Austin, Licensing & Operations Supervisor
Joshua Boggan, LMSW, Deputy Executive Director
Jennifer Lang, Deputy Executive Director
Dalyce Logan, Senior Licensing Specialist
Christy Palmore, Senior Discipline and Compliance Case Specialist
Maria Stransky, LPC, CSOTP, CSAC, Executive Director

DHP STAFF PRESENT: Erin Barrett, JD, Director of Legislative & Regulatory Affairs
David Brown, DC, Agency Director
Barbara Hodgdon, PhD, Deputy Director, Healthcare Workforce Data Center

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Five members of the public were in attendance

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Lawson called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**ROLL CALL/
ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:** All Board members and staff introduced themselves. Seven Board members were present in person at roll call, establishing a quorum.

MISSION STATEMENT: Dr. Lawson read the Department of Health Professions' mission statement. He then read the emergency egress instructions.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: **Motion:** Mr. Scott made a motion to adopt the agenda with flexibility to move agenda items around as needed. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT: No public comment was provided

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Board reviewed the minutes from the quarterly board meeting held on July 17, 2026.

Motion: Ms. Griffin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

AGENCY DIRECTOR REPORT:

Dr. Brown provided an update on the programs established under the Rural Health Transformation Program in partnership with collaborating organizations, the four key initiatives developed were:

- **CareIQ**, which will leverage technology and data-driven solutions to modernize healthcare systems, reduce administrative burden on providers, and improve patient outcomes,
- **Homegrown Health Heroes**, will strengthen the rural healthcare workforce by expanding education and training opportunities and supporting the recruitment and retention of healthcare providers,
- **Connected Care, Closer to Home** will improve access to healthcare through telehealth and mobile care services while reducing avoidable emergency department visits,
- **Live Well Together** will support healthier communities by expanding prevention initiatives and increasing access to nutritious food and wellness resources.

Dr. Brown also discussed the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Grown Here Stay Here initiative, for leveraging professional compacts and evaluating scope-of-practice opportunities and exploring optimal uses of artificial intelligence, telehealth, and related innovations.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

Dr. Lawson reported to the Board that he and Ms. Stransky attended a meeting last week with the Deputy Secretary and provided a brief summary of the discussion. He further noted that he conveyed the Board's concerns regarding delays in the Compact process resulting from pending criminal background checks.

REGULATORY COMMITTEE REPORT:

Dr. Lawson provided an update from the Regulatory Committee and the periodic review process. Dr. Lawson informed the Board that during the last regulatory meeting, the committee discussed the possibility of allowing individuals to earn continuing education credit for attending board meetings.

Dr. Lawson also invited Board members to participate in the AASCB Member Hangout Sessions.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Ms. Weaver introduced herself as the new Board Counsel for the Board of Counseling, succeeding James Rutkowski, who was recently promoted to Section Chief in the Health Services Division of the Office of the Attorney General. She stated that she looks forward to serving in this role.

LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REPORT:

Ms. Barrett reviewed and discussed with the Board the current regulatory actions pertaining to the Board of Counseling, as outlined in the agenda packet beginning on page 9, dated September 28, 2026.

Ms. Barrett also reviewed the regulatory process with the Board.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S
REPORT:**

Ms. Stransky recognized and commended the staff for their continued hard work. She also welcomed Mr. Josh Boggan, the new Deputy Executive Director, who joined the Behavioral Science Unit from the Enforcement Division on August 10.

DISCIPLINE REPORT:

Ms. Lang provided a verbal report. She indicated that the Board's Case Reviewer has reviewed more than 1,200 cases in the past five years. She advised that she and her staff continue to explore additional methods to increase efficiency. Ms. Lang also informed the Board that a formal hearing is scheduled for January 2027 following the Board meeting.

Dr. Brown reminded Board members that cases may be referred to them for review, as Board members have a duty to assist in reducing bottlenecks in the review process. He encouraged the Board to utilize the professional expertise and talents of its members to support case review, rather than relying solely on designated reviewers.

LICENSING REPORT:

Mr. Boggan introduced himself as the new Deputy Executive Director for the Boards of Counseling, Psychology, and Social Work, replacing Charlotte Lenart, who retired earlier this year. He provided an update on Licensing operations and highlighted several notable trends, including significant increases in application volume. When comparing an average month in CY2024 to CY2026

- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) applications increased by 18 percent.
- Resident applications increased by 21 percent.
- Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) applications increased by 42 percent.

NEW BUSINESS:

2026 Workforce Report

Dr. Hodgdon presented the Board with the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) Workforce 2026 Survey Findings. Key conclusions from the LPC survey included:

- An increase in the number of licensees, Virginia's workforce, and full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- Age distribution has remained relatively stable since 2021, while the diversity index has continued to increase over time.
- Although median income has risen, median educational debt has remained higher than median income since 2019.
- A majority of respondents accept cash or self-pay, with an increase in the percentage accepting Medicare and Medicaid.
- A decrease in the percentage working in community boards and clinics, accompanied by an increase in those working in private practice (both solo and group settings).
- An increase in the percentage intending to join an interstate compact, with a majority providing in-state telehealth services.

Dr. Hodgdon also presented the Board with the Qualified Mental Health Professionals (QMHP) Workforce 2026 Survey Findings. Key conclusions from the QMHP survey included:

- A decrease in the number of registrants, Virginia's workforce, and FTEs.
- A predominantly female workforce, with a high diversity index.
- A majority of registrants have held their credential for over five years and report high job satisfaction.
- Most QMHPs are engaged in providing care coordination and client education.
- More than two in five QMHPs intend to pursue additional education as residents.

Bylaws Update

Ms. Barrett reviewed the proposed changes to the bylaws, along with additional suggested revisions.

Motion: Ms. Griffin made a motion to rescind 115-1.2 as a guidance document. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

Motion: Ms. Anastasiou made a motion to adopt the bylaws as a policy document, as presented. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

RECOMMENDED DECISIONS:

Closed Meeting: Dr. Tinsley moved to convene a closed meeting pursuant to § 2.2-3711(A)(27) of the *Code of Virginia* to consider agency subordinate recommendations. He further moved that Erin Weaver, Maria Stransky, Jennifer Lang, Josh Boggan, and Latasha Austin attend the closed meeting because their presence was deemed necessary and would aid the board in its deliberations. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Matters Considered:

Leah Crawford, LPC, CSAC

License No. 0701009565

Certificate No. 071010349

Case No. 232991

Ms. Crawford did not appear before the board but submitted a written response. The board considered Ms. Crawford's response, and the agency subordinate's recommendation to indefinitely suspend Ms. Crawford's license to practice professional counseling, and certificate to practice substance abuse counseling, for not less than 36 months.

Ayanna Peeler, QMHP Reinstatement Applicant

Registration No. 0732005922

Case Nos. 240880, 234411

Ms. Peeler did not appear before the board but submitted a written response. The board considered Ms. Peeler's response, and the agency subordinate's recommendation to approve the reinstatement application, with certain terms and conditions.

Reconvene:

Dr. Tinsley moved to certify that, pursuant to § 2.2-3712 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Counseling heard, discussed, or considered only

October 9, 2026

Quarterly Board Meeting

Virginia Board of Counseling

those public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only such public business matters as identified in the original motion. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Decisions:

Motion: Ms. Anastasiou moved to accept the agency subordinate's recommendation, as presented, in the matter of Leah Crawford, LPC, CSAC. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

Motion: In the matter of Ayanna Peeler, QMHP, Ms. Anastasiou moved to accept the agency subordinate's recommendation, as amended. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next full Board meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2027.

ADJOURNMENT:

Dr. Lawson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

Gerard Lawson, PhD, LPC, LSATP, NCC, Chairperson

Maria S. Stransky, LPC, CSOTP, CSAC, Executive Director