

House Bill 768 Workgroup Meeting Minutes
Department of Health Professions
Board Room 2
9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, VA 23233
Monday, August 31, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

MEETING CHAIR: David Brown, D.C., Agency Director, Department of Health Professions

WORKGROUP MEMBERS: Eric Reynolds, JD
Seth Ragosta, JD
Stacey Hoffmann, Psy.D., LCP
Sonal Pancholi Doran, Psy.D., LCP

WORKGROUP MEMBERS ABSENT: Martin Buxton, MD
Honorable Claude V. Worrell II

BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY STAFF PRESENT: Maria Stransky, LPC, CSAC, CSOTP, Executive Director
Jennifer Lang, Deputy Executive Director
Josh Boggan, LMSW, Deputy Executive Director
Meagan Ohlsson, Senior Licensing Specialist

BOARD OF MEDICINE STAFF PRESENT: William Harp, MD, Executive Director
Jennifer Deschenes, JD, MS, Deputy Executive Director

DHP STAFF PRESENT: Erin Barrett, Director of Legislative Affairs and Policy

CALL TO ORDER: Dr. Brown called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

MISSION STATEMENT: Dr. Brown read the mission statement of the Department of Health Professions and the emergency egress procedures.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA: The agenda was adopted as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Barrett presented proposed changes for the workgroup's consideration. The workgroup reviewed the proposed changes.

Motion: Mr. Ragosta moved to add the language as presented to the July 20, 2026, meeting minutes. The motion was properly seconded and passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: Ms. Barrett provided an overview of House Bill 768, which directs the Boards of Psychology and Medicine to jointly convene a workgroup to study and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the availability of qualified mental health professionals willing to serve as court-appointed experts in family law proceedings.

Ms. Barrett summarized the workgroup's discussion from the July 20, 2026 meeting which include examining the complaint and investigation processes that may deter qualified professionals from accepting court appointments; reviewing regulatory and common law approaches adopted in other jurisdictions; assessing whether regulatory or statutory changes are warranted to provide protections for mental health professionals serving as court-appointed evaluators; and developing recommendations to increase the number of qualified court-appointed evaluators.

The workgroup recommended the following changes, which require statutory amendments:

- Provision of civil liability under Title 8:01;
- Statutory ban on anonymous complaints to the Department of Health Professions under Virginia Code § 54.1-2506.01;
- Creation of a statutory framework under Title 30 for complaints related to the work product or testimony provided by a court-appointed evaluator; and
- Statutory fee-shifting provision for civil cases against court-appointed custody evaluators.

NEW BUSINESS:

The workgroup discussed strategies to increase the number of professionals willing to accept court-appointed custody evaluations and provide expert testimony. Members emphasized the importance of developing a structured framework and standards of practice that include specialized forensic training.

The workgroup discussed training models similar to the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) forensic training course and, the University of Virginia's Institute of Law, Psychiatry, and Public Policy (ILPPP). The workgroup agreed training should be conducted by a professionally recognized organization such as American psychological Association (APA), Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC) or a similar organization.

The workgroup recommended a statutory amendment under Title 30 to establish a framework that includes professional forensic training from a recognized organization. The workgroup also discussed strategies to increase the number of qualified professionals willing to serve as court-appointed evaluators, including identifying and advertising available forensic training opportunities that would allow practitioners to develop the specialized knowledge and expertise necessary to serve as subject matter experts. The workgroup noted that identifying and advertising available forensic training opportunities would not require a statutory amendment.

NEXT STEPS:

Ms. Barrett will draft the required report documenting the workgroup's discussions and consensus recommendations. Once drafted, agency staff and workgroup members will review the report and provide feedback prior to its submission to the Chairs of the House Committee on Health and Human Services and the Senate Committee on Education and Health.

ADJOURNMENT:

Dr. Brown adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.