

PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE



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New Developments and Issues Emerge at Second Health Licensing Board Roundtable Meeting

Secretary Basil L. Merenda and Deputy Commissioner Mark Vessella held a Health Licensing Board Roundtable discussion meeting in Harrisburg on Oct. 21. This was the second time the health licensing board chairs, administrators and division chiefs gathered for a joint meeting.



Secretary Merenda revived the joint roundtable meetings this year, which had been a regular occurrence in the past. The first meeting, held in July, proved to be very successful in raising issues that affected multiple health-related boards. The meeting also produced positive results; Secretary Merenda raised the boards' concerns about their exclusion from the legislature's pain task force and ensured that the licensing boards will be represented if the initiative is reintroduced.

During the October meeting, the Office of Communications and Press reported that an email newsletter preference center is currently in development and is anticipated to be ready by the end of the year. The preference center will allow licensees to easily subscribe or unsubscribe to newsletters and alerts from multiple boards. Currently, licensees may only receive newsletters and alerts from a single board with which they are licensed.

For the first time, representatives of the Cosmetology Board were present in order to address the expanded use of medical devices and procedures for cosmetic purposes outside of the medical setting. Cosmetology Board vice-chair MaryLou Enoches shared her concerns that these procedures may be occurring in salons and spas without the direct involvement or oversight of a physician. Dental Board chair Dr. Philip Siegel also raised the need to provide dentists with more specific guidelines for the use of Botox treatments. The Cosmetology, Medical, Osteopathic, Dental, Nursing and Pharmacy boards agreed to meet in the future to identify areas of mutual concern and solutions.

The meeting also featured Kevin Knipe of the Division of Professional Health Monitoring Programs, who provided an in-depth overview of the Voluntary Recovery Program (VRP), Disciplinary Monitoring Unit (DMU) and other resources available to help licensees recover from substance abuse problems and continue their careers. Other topics of discussion included concerns about the inspection process and technical problems with online license renewal.

The group plans to reconvene in early January prior to the inauguration of the next governor.

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