

PENNSYLVANIA STATE BOARD OF MEDICINE



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Health Licensing Board Roundtable Yields Positive Feedback and Results

by Kaitlin Murphy, Office of Communications and Press intern

Acting Secretary Basil L. Merenda and Deputy Commissioner Mark Vessella held the first Health Licensing Board Roundtable discussion meeting in several years on July 15. The meeting's 30 attendees included board chairs, administrators and division chiefs.

Roundtable meetings with the health licensing boards were a regular occurrence in the past and proved to be a very valuable forum for discussing issues that involved multiple boards. The idea was reintroduced when Acting Secretary Merenda first joined the department as Commissioner of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs, and as Acting Secretary, he revived the meetings.

During the meeting, various administrative issues were discussed and board chairs were given the opportunity to raise issues of concern for their board. Some areas of concern included the 18-24 month process for creating and amending regulations and the quality of expert witnesses the commonwealth uses for prosecution hearings.

Attendees also expressed their desire to improve communication between health-related boards by allowing licensees to receive newsletters from other boards. The Office of Communications and Press is currently working with the newsletter vendor to develop a means for all licensees to select which newsletters they would like to receive.

In addition, the board voiced concern over the exclusion of licensure boards in the pain task force, which was established by a resolution to study pain management protocols. Acting Secretary Merenda agreed that involvement of the boards in further pain management protocol discussions is critical, given their role of disciplining practitioners who violate such protocols. After the meeting, Acting Secretary Merenda reached out to State Representative Jennifer Mann, who sponsored the resolution, and it was agreed that the boards should be represented if it is reintroduced.

More roundtable meetings will likely be scheduled in the future. Acting Secretary Merenda hopes to convene the board quarterly.

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