



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO Box 47852 · Olympia Washington 98504-7852

**DENTAL QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMISSION
SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Friday, April 17, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Julia Richman, DDS, Chair
Aaron Stevens, DMD, Vice Chair
Kunal Walia, DDS
Karla Briggs, Public Member
Kathleen Elling, EFDA
Lyle McClellan, DDS
Abhishake Banda, DMD, MD
Karen Clements, DDS
David Carsten, DDS
Sonia Pal, DDS
Ronald Marsh, DDS
Brian Macall, DDS
Marlynne Fulton, Public Member
John Liu, DDS
Bree Kramer, EFDA
Tiffany Bass, DDS

STAFF PRESENT

Trina Crawford, Executive Director
Jennifer Santiago, Program Manager
Becky McElhiney, Assistant Program
Manager
Bill Kellington, Supervising Staff Attorney
Heather Carter, Assistant Attorney General
(AAG)

OPEN SESSION

1. **CALL TO ORDER** – Julia Richman, DDS, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
 - 1.1. The commission and staff introduced themselves.
 - 1.2. The commission approved the agenda as presented.
2. **DENTAL COVID-19 RESPONSE**
 - The commission discussed requirements for basic life support (BLS) certification.
 - There have been concerns related to dentists being able to meet the certification requirements at this time due to in-person certification courses being cancelled because of the COVID-19 situation.
 - The American Heart Association has offered a 120 day extension for expiration dates of certifications to accommodate this challenge.

- Dr. Liu moved to support AHA policy to make certifications valid for 120 days after expiration date. Dr. Marsh seconded the motion. A vote was conducted and the motion passed with no opposed.
- The commission discussed concerns received regarding credit for online continuing education hours.
 - There have been concerns related to dentists being able to meet continuing education (CE) requirements at this time due to in-person courses being cancelled because of the COVID-19 situation. Reevaluation or waivers have been requested of the rule (WAC 246-817-440 (4)(b)(i)) that stipulates 30 minutes of CE will count per 1 hour of online education.
 - The three year renewal cycle is not up until 2022, so continuing education is not due immediately and a dentist would still have time to complete their CE requirements before the first renewal cycle is up.
 - Though the COVID-19 situation has resulted in the cancellation of many in-person courses, there are live webinars available which count for full CE credit.
 - Dr. Richman suggested waiting until the fall of this year to reevaluate the situation and make any necessary changes.
 - Drs. Carsten and Marsh agreed with Dr. Richman's suggestion.
 - Dr. McClellan clarified that the rule was put into place due to concerns about the quality of online CE because online courses are not interactive like in-person courses or live webinars. Most dentists will not have to attest to CE hours this year.
 - Dr. Pal agreed with Dr. Richman's suggestion and proposed that the commission issue a definitive statement on the issue.
 - Dr. Richman expressed her concern that some may not realize live webinars are not considered online training for the purpose of CE credits and wanted to clarify that in any communication the commission sent out on this topic.
 - Dr. Richman added that one of the benefits of live webinars vs. in-person courses could be cost savings associated with travel to conferences.
 - Dr. Liu stated that many training organizations are limited to live webinar only at this time due to the COVID-19 situation, so there may be more webinar options than normal.
 - Ms. Santiago asked the commission if they were in agreement to send out a letter or statement regarding online CE. The commission members stated they were all in agreement.
 - Dr. Clements suggested sending this message at the same time as the message regarding BLS requirements, and asked if the 50% online CE rule applies to BLS as well.
 - Ms. Santiago clarified that the CE rule does not apply to BLS, and there is nothing currently in rule that prohibits online BLS training.
- The commission discussed other correspondence received.
 - The commission received a letter from the Washington State Dental Association (WSDA) regarding extension for CE requirements for sedation permits.
 - Dr. Richman indicated her support of extending CE requirements for sedation permits, and suggested extending by 6-9 months.

- Dr. Clements inquired if by extending the due date, it would overlap with the following CE cycle.
- Ms. Santiago stated that in situations where CE due dates are extended, a letter is sent to the practitioner indicating that the next cycle of CE is also due on the regular due date.
- Ms. Carter stated that there is a provision for the commission to waive or extend CE due dates, and recommended extension over waivers.
- Dr. Clements suggested extending for 6 months after the stay-at-home orders are lifted.
- Drs. Liu and Richman agreed with Dr. Clements' suggestion.
- Ms. Carter expressed concerns with the uncertainty of the length of the stay-at-home order, and reminded the commission that practitioners could still earn CE for the duration of the order.
- Dr. Carsten suggested an extension through October 1, 2020, and re-examine at that time.
- Dr. Clements suggested including language that the commission reserves the right to further extend these due dates if needed.
- Dr. Liu indicated that even after the order is lifted, some practitioners may not feel comfortable travelling or attending large gatherings. He expressed concerns that online training or live webinars do not allow for simulations, and that the October date may be premature. He suggested the extension be dependent upon the date the order is lifted.
- Dr. McClellan asked Ms. Santiago about the administrative process regarding renewals with extensions.
- Ms. Santiago indicated that there was currently an extension for license renewals and a moratorium for CE audits for all health care practitioners in place until September 30, 2020.
- Dr. McClellan suggested sharing information about the renewal extensions and challenges presented by the COVID-19 situation, as well as language indicating the commission will consider and continue discussions about these issues.
- Ms. Carter reminded the commission that their authority to conduct CE audits is temporarily extended until after September 30, 2020.
- Dr. Carsten suggested extending the due date to September 30, 2020, to align with other COVID-related extensions in place.
- Dr. Marsh agreed with Dr. Carsten's suggestion.
- Dr. Richman proposed adding the extensions to the July 2020 commission meeting to allow enough time to process changes if needed.
- Ms. Santiago inquired if proof of CE would be required for those who chose to renew their sedation permit prior to September 30, 2020. The commission could choose to evaluate extension or waiver requests on a case by case basis.
- Dr. Richman expressed her preference to evaluate extension requests on a case by case basis.

- Dr. Marsh suggested including language that granting extensions is not the preferred solution, and practitioners should attempt to complete CE as normal prior to requesting an extension.
- The commission discussed correspondence regarding defining what constitutes a dental emergency.
 - The commission agreed that it was up to each individual practitioner’s judgement to determine whether patient treatment was emergent or not.
 - There was a general consensus among the commission that practitioners should use guidance from the American Dental Association as it becomes available and clinical judgement to guide decisions during these uncertain times. Practitioners should reduce the spread of aerosols whenever possible.
- Dr. Carsten shared an update with the commission about N95 masks and the status of COVID-19 testing capabilities. N95 masks must be fit-tested to be effective, and may not fit properly over beards.
- Dr. Stevens inquired about the commission’s approach regarding practitioners using antibiotics for issues that would normally warrant an in-person visit.
 - Dr. Richman shared her opinion that these are unusual times, and she is therefore inclined to give practitioners more latitude than usual.
 - Dr. Carsten shared his opinion that practitioners should use their best clinical judgement.
- Ms. Crawford suggested aligning the BLS and sedation permit due date extensions so that the commission is not tracking two separate due dates.
- Dr. Richman agreed and suggested extending both to September 30, 2020.
- Dr. Marsh asked about the status of the June 5, 2020 commission meeting.
 - Ms. Santiago indicated that at this time, the meeting is still scheduled but that staff are monitoring the COVID-19 situation and may need to cancel or switch the format to webinar.
- Ms. Santiago proposed the commission hold another 1-hour special meeting in May.
- Dr. Richman suggested extending the special meeting to two hours or holding two 1-hour meetings.
- Ms. Santiago will work on messaging for the topics discussed and send to the commission chair and vice-chair for review prior to distribution.

3. ADJOURN

The commission adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Submitted By:

Commission Approval By:

Signature on file
Jennifer Santiago, Program Manager

Signature on file
Julia Richman, DDS, Chairperson