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Arizona State Board of Nursing

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Comprehensive Overview of Board Meeting

Welcome attendees to the Arizona State Board of Nursing (AZBN) meeting. The five reasons for this meeting are:

- 1.) Review complaints that staff have received and investigated to determine, based upon evidence and probable cause, whether there has been a violation of the Nurse Practice Act;
- 2.) Review potential rule or statute revisions related to nursing practice and regulation;
- 3.) Approve advisory opinions;
- 4.) Determine compliance with nursing education program standards; or
- 5.) Review other committee reports and recommendations.

Sources of Complaints: may include employers, coworkers or other healthcare professionals, patient or family members, law enforcement, self-reports, and other regulatory agencies. Sources of complaints related to applicants for licensure/certification may include responses to questions asked on the application, information related to a current or prior investigation, discipline in another state, and information received from a criminal background check.

Complaint Processing: When the Board receives a complaint or self-report, the complaint is triaged to determine if the complaint meets the threshold criteria for investigation. The Board receives approximately 500 complaints a month, of which half are determined to meet established criteria for further investigation. Upon opening the complaint, the Board assigns a case number and an investigator. The investigator collects objective information from several sources, interviews the subject of the complaint (“the respondent” or the “applicant”) and other witnesses, and then compiles the findings into an investigative report.

Board Member Review Agenda Materials: Approximately two to three weeks before the board meeting, staff will provide board members with the investigative and other board business reports to be reviewed at the upcoming meeting. The Board members review approximately 200-250 investigative cases per Board meeting to determine if there is probable cause that a violation of the law has occurred. The Board members read the confidential investigative reports and other documents before the meeting and are prepared to discuss the materials during the Board meeting.

Persons with Investigative Cases on the Agenda: If you have a pending investigation regarding your application or a complaint has been submitted against your license/certificate, you are welcome and encouraged to hear the discussion and outcome. Please know that this is an open public meeting and **not a hearing**. You may

give a verbal presentation (up to 5 minutes), to provide the Board members with information you feel is pertinent for their consideration. You may also choose to be available to answer their questions, or you may be present and not speak at all. If you need more clarification after the Board has voted on your case, the investigator assigned to your case will discuss the decision of the Board with you.

The Board President will identify the case/item they are discussing with the agenda item and the name and APRN/RN/LPN/LNA/CNA number/applicant. If you or your attorney wish to address the board, please enter your name with the legal secretary, who will enter your name for that agenda item. When your case is called, the board will ask you to come forward to the speaker's table to provide your comments.

Board members will deliberate about the case and make a motion stating what action, if any, should occur. Once a motion is seconded, the board members may discuss it. For a motion to pass, a majority of the voting Board members must vote in favor of it.

BOARD ACTIONS

Possible outcomes of the investigative cases reviewed by the Board:

NON-DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Dismiss—The evidence does not support that the case has merit or that the Nurse Practice Act has been violated.

Letter of Concern - A letter from the Board expressing concern that a licensee, certificate holder, or applicant may have engaged in questionable conduct, although the conduct does not necessarily violate the Nurse Practice Act.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Civil Penalty - A monetary fine issued by the Board, not to exceed \$1,000, per incident, given singly or in combination with any disciplinary action for violating the Nurse Practice Act.

Decree of Censure—This official discipline by the Board states that the nurse's conduct violated the Nurse Practice Act but does not represent a continued risk to the patient or the public.

Probation - This action allows the licensee to continue working during the probationary period, subject to compliance with the terms and conditions. During the probationary period, the licensee must be supervised in their practice and complete certain requirements intended to remediate (rehabilitate or educate) the nurse in his/her area(s) of practice. For example, a nurse with a substance abuse disorder may be required to enter and complete treatment, attend A.A. /N.A. meetings and abstain from alcohol and other drug use along with other requirements. A nurse who lacks sufficient knowledge regarding the safe administration of medications may be required to take a pharmacology course.

Suspension - A person who has been suspended may not practice during the suspension period. A person who has been suspended has terms and conditions that must be fulfilled during the suspension period before being allowed to resume practice. Examples of terms and conditions may include completing a refresher course, psychological or substance abuse treatment, and other requirements. A licensee who has been suspended often has a probationary period following the successful completion of the terms of suspension.

Revocation - This action prohibits the nurse/certificate holder from practicing for at least five years, pursuant to A.A.C. R4-19-404. When a license/certificate has been revoked, the applicant for re-issuance must provide detailed information to the Board that the reason for revocation no longer exists and that the issuance of a license/certificate would no longer threaten the public health or safety. A.A.C. R4-19-404 or R4-19-815. The individual whose license/certificate has been revoked may not practice or otherwise indicate to the public that they hold a license/certificate.

Denial—A person (applicant) who has been denied a license/certificate may not practice and is not eligible to reapply to the Board for five years.

Voluntary Surrender—An APRN, RN, LPN, LPN, or LNA has voluntarily surrendered their license or certificate by signing a consent agreement.

ADMINISTRATIVE VIOLATIONS

Administrative Penalty - A penalty/fine given to a licensee or certificate holder who has worked on an

expired license/certificate or failed to notify the Board of an address change within 30 days. It is not reportable to NCSBN or other national data centers.

For discipline to be final and in effect, a person must either consent to the discipline by signing a “Consent Agreement”. If the person does not want to sign the consent agreement, they will have an opportunity for a hearing. After an Administrative Law Judge holds a hearing at the Office of Administrative Hearings, the Board Members will read the hearing transcript and determine the “Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law”, if any, that support the board outcome and Board Order.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

The Call to Public is scheduled at each meeting to provide licensees, certificate holders and the public access to the AZBN Board Members and Staff. The Board President allows 5 minutes for each individual to address the Board regarding concerns, issues and/or questions.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD AND MEETING FREQUENCY

The Arizona State Board of Nursing consists of 11 members, appointed by the Governor and typically serving a term of five years. Six members are Registered Nurses, including a minimum of one Registered Nurse Practitioner or Clinical Specialist, two are Licensed Practical Nurses, one is a Nursing Assistant or a Nursing Assistant Educator, and two represent the public at large.

The Board meets for two days, approximately every eight weeks. Meetings begin at 8:00 A.M. each day.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

CAROLYN JO MCCORMIES, RN, MSN, FNP-BC – PRESIDENT - TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2024

Mrs. McCormies has been a Registered Nurse for 30 years and is a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner. She has a special focus on rural healthcare, where she practices as an advanced practice provider and has practiced in most areas of nursing. She has had the privilege of traveling to Honduras on medical missions and writing NCLEX© test questions. Carolyn is a Board Member of the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) and a District Board member of Mt. Graham Regional Medical Center.

She graduated with an Associate’s degree from Mesa Community College, then received a Bachelor’s degree from Arizona State University and an MS in Nursing and Family Nurse Practitioner from Arizona State University. Her greatest accomplishments are being a wife, mother and grandmother. Her professional memberships include the Arizona Nurses Association, the American Nurses Association, National League for Nursing, the Organization for Associate Degree Nursing, and Sigma Theta Tau.

ANGELA FOUNTAIN, DNP, CRNA – VICE PRESIDENT -TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2024

Dr. Fountain received her Doctorate of Nursing Practice in 2019 from Arizona State University, Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia in 2013 from Woford College, and Master of Science in Nursing in 2010 from Grand Canyon University. She is a member of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists and the Arizona Association of Nurse Anesthetists. Her areas of expertise or clinical interest include Anesthesia, Critical Care, and Workplace Incivility.

KYRA LOCNIKAR -- SECRETARY - PUBLIC MEMBER -TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2028

Ms. Locnikar received her Bachelor of Arts from ASU in 1999 and Master’s Degree in Clinical Psychology (Arizona School of Professional Psychology) in 2002. She has a Doctoral Candidate status from Argosy University. She holds three licenses: an aesthetician, laser technician, and licensed real estate agent.

Kyra is a previous Board Member of the Arizona Board of Cosmetology and served two terms on the Arizona Board of Pharmacy. Other experiences include a two-year internship at the State Hospital, Valley Wise Hospital and Maricopa Jail system. She has been a professor/Instructor at local Medical/Laser Technician School, and has a passion with a desire for the field of medicine.

Ms. Locnikar has extensive knowledge and experience in aesthetic medicine, addiction medicine, medical device, pharmacy, oncology, REMS, pain management, biotechnology, surgical instruments, pharmaceuticals and clinical new business development.

Affiliations include:

- American Psychological Association
- Arizona Psychological Association
- Association of Aesthetic Professionals
- National Board of Pharmacy
- Arizona Pharmacy Association

LISA SMITH, PhD, RN, CNE -- TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2028

Dr. Smith has fifteen years of experience in hospital management and executive nursing administration and fourteen years in higher education. She received her PhD in Nursing from Barry University in Miami, Florida, in 2012. She is the Dean of Nursing and Healthcare Professions at Grand Canyon University.

Dr. CARMEN HILL-MEKOBA, DNP, APRN-BC --TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2025

Dr. Carmen Hill-Mekoba, DNP, APRN-BC, is an adult and geriatric Nurse Practitioner. Over twenty years ago, she began her nursing career in the hospital, working in cardiac and critical care areas. After leaving the hospital, she began working as a Worker's Compensation Case Manager and progressed to the occupational health environment. As an occupational health nurse, she led the Linden, New Jersey and Doraville, Georgia medical departments at General Motors Corporation for eight years. Over fifteen years ago, she resigned from General Motors and incorporated her own business, which provided medical house calls to the elderly and consultative services to corporations for wellness initiatives. For 5 ½ years, she was in a leadership position as the Senior Vice President of Clinical Services for Matrix Medical Network,, which is an organization that delivers innovative healthcare initiatives in the home, as well as the community. She was also the prior Vice President of Clinical Services Delivery for Accolade Incorporated, a clinical advocacy company that works with employers to help employees navigate through the healthcare delivery system. She has also taught as adjunct faculty for RN to BSN, nurse practitioners, and doctoral students at Simmons College of Nursing, Chamberlain University, the University of Texas at Arlington, and Boise State University.

Dr. Hill-Mekoba earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. In 2010, she completed a post-master's certificate in the Family Nurse Practitioner program at the University of Massachusetts. Additionally, in May of 2011, she graduated from Georgia Southern University with a doctorate in nursing practice. She has also served on the Board of Directors for the American Association of Occupational Health Nurses. Her practice philosophy is based on empowering patients with the knowledge that is needed to improve overall health and wellness.

Volunteerism and stewardship play an intricate role in Dr. Hill-Mekoba's life. For the last several years, she has served as program chair for Hashtag Lunch Bag in Phoenix, an organization that coordinates events to pack and distribute bagged lunches to the homeless with inspirational notes of encouragement. Additionally, she has led a Mentoring in Medicine program in Atlanta, where students enrolled in the city's public school system were invited to participate in activities focused on the health sciences.

Dr. Hill-Mekoba has been married for over twenty-five years and is the mother of three children. She resided in Georgia for thirteen years but was born and raised in New Jersey. She relocated to Arizona over five years ago.

Dr. LAWANDA DUPREE, DNP, APRN, FNP-C –TERM EXPIRES June 30, 2027

Dr. Dupree graduated with her Doctor of Nursing Practice in 2021 from Frontier Nursing University. Before receiving her doctorate, she received her Master of Science in Nursing/FNP from the University of Phoenix in 2015. She received her BSN from Grand Canyon University in 2011.

Over the past ten years, Dr. Dupree's areas of expertise and clinical interest have included advanced practice as a Family Nurse Practitioner, providing care for underserved populations, and emergency management.

Dr. MARGI J. SCHULTZ, PhD, RN, CNE, PLNC, FAADN– TERM EXPIRES June 30, 2024

Dr. Margi Schultz is the Administrator for Maricopa Nursing, a consortium of eight Maricopa County Community College District colleges. Dr. Schultz holds an AAS in Nursing, BSN, MSN, and a Ph.D. in Education with a focus in Distance Nursing Education from Capella University. Dr. Schultz worked as a staff LPN and RN in pediatrics and critical care, finding her passion for education while working as the educator of critical care Services at a valley hospital system. Dr. Schultz is a professional legal nurse consultant and adjunct faculty in online nursing programs. She is dedicated to serving Arizona communities and spends as much time as possible in the White Mountains of Arizona.

SHAREEDAH AL-HARK, LPN – TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2024

Ms. Al-Hark has been an LPN for over 11 years and graduated from Erie 2 Boces in 2010. She has experience in long-term care and has been an Assisted Living Manager. She graduated from the Assisted Living Training School in 2020. In 2021, She completed a program in wound care from the Wound Care Educational Institute.

CHRISTINE T.D. ELLIS BSN, RN, – TERM EXPIRES JUNE 30, 2028

Christine Ellis (BSN) is a registered nurse with over thirty years of elder care experience serving the community. Nineteen years ago, she founded Cedar Sanctuary LLC, realizing that families needed an alternative to the “mass-care” approach to caring for their loved ones.

Before establishing Cedars Sanctuary, Christine worked as an RN for many large hospitals and care facilities, holding many high-level positions, such as Director of Nursing in the Phoenix-Metropolitan area. Her focus has been primarily on assisted living homes, and Christine has devoted countless hours to advocating for improvements in the industry through education and action.

The governor has appointed her to serve on various boards representing assisted living homes. Her lifelong goal is to serve her community by developing the next generation of caregivers with attention to the spirit, soul, and body. She taught medical assistant and certified nursing assistant classes in Arizona’s community colleges for many years.

In addition to caring for the elderly for years, she also pursued another passion: feeding the needy and homeless. For over 17 years, she has been part of the foundation of the Foothills Community Services/The Bridge Ministry, which helps feed the local homeless population and provides for their spiritual needs, partnering with countless other ministries in Arizona.

BOARD STAFF

The Arizona State Board of Nursing consists of approximately 65 staff positions. The Executive Director and Associate Directors are master or doctoral-prepared nurses. The Program Administrators are masters prepared nurses or have prior law enforcement experience. Board Nurse Practice Consultants (NPC) are either doctoral-prepared Advanced Practice Nurses or Nurses with a master's or bachelor’s degree. Senior Investigators are not nurses but have experience in law enforcement, criminal justice studies, or other areas that prepare them as investigators. NPCs and Senior Investigators are responsible for investigating complaints, implementing Board decisions, monitoring and reporting compliance of licensees/certificate holders subject to discipline or in Alternative to Discipline (ATD), facilitating AZBN committees, assisting in the drafting of legislation and rules, surveying all nursing and nursing assistant programs and educating the public and nursing community regarding the Arizona Nurse Practice Act. The AZBN staff carries out the mission and the directives of the Board.

AZBN staff who commonly participate in Board meetings at different times include:

- Joey Ridenour, MN, RN, FAAN, Executive Director
- Diane Caruso, MSN, FNP-C, Associate Director Complaints & Investigations
- Shannon Bitza, DNP, AGPCNP-BC, AGACNP-BC, Associate Director Education & Evidenced-Based Regulation
- Kirk Olson, BA, Program Administrator II- Senior Investigators
- Sara Steffen, MSN, ANP-C, Program Administrator Monitoring & Alternative to Discipline Programs (ATD)
- Marla Moore, RN, BSN, MA, Scope of Practice Expert

Cindy George, BSN, RN, Education Program Administrator
Michelle Bagford, BSN, MHA, CPHQ Nurse Practice Consultant
Paula Fortin, MSN, FNP-BC, Nurse Practice Consultant
Rachel Kimes, MSN, FNP-BC, ACNP-BC, Nurse Practice Consultant
Janet Olson, DNP, FNP-BC, NNP-BC, Nurse Practice Consultant
Tiffany Fotinos, MSN, FNP-C, Nurse Practice Consultant
Michelina Stazzone, DNP, RN, CPNP-PC, Nurse Practice Consultant
Abby Connolly, BSN, RN, Nurse Practice Consultant
Tamara Uhler, MSN, RN, Nurse Practice Consultant
Lolita Moore, BSN, RN, Nurse Practice Consultant
Ashley Branch, BSN, RN, Nurse Practice Consultant
Bonnie Richter, MSW, Senior Investigator
Dolores Hurtado, Senior Investigator
Michelle Morton, Senior Investigator/Triage Coordinator
Stephanie Cruz, Senior Investigator - ATD
Brent Sutter, Senior Investigator – ATD
Amy Sammito, Senior Investigator
Bella Portuese, BS, Senior Investigator
Harold Rodriguez, BA, WZ Certified, Senior Investigator
Gari Carroll, Senior Investigator
James Silva, Senior Investigator
Amy Wilson, Senior Investigator
Trina Smith, Legal Assistant – Hearing Department
Samantha Goik, Senior Investigator
Sara Steffen, APRN Consultant
Christina Moorioan- Pennington, APRN Consultant
Mariya Gold, APRN Consultant
Lily Burton, Senior Investigator
Amelia Heredia, Senior Investigator
Anela Cejvanovik, Senior Investigator
Heather Clayton, Senior Investigator
Nicole Davis, APRN Consultant

Roberto Pulver, Assistant Attorney General, is an employee of the Office of the Attorney General assigned to the Board of Nursing

Emma Mamaluy, JD, Chief Legal Counsel, is employed by the AZBN.

Diane DeDea, JD, Assistant Chief Counsel. is employed by the AZBN.

Carrie Smith, Assistant Attorney General is Interim Advisor.