



**Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC)
Licensing Subcommittee Minutes
August 9, 2022 1: 00 pm to 2: 00 pm**

Committee Members: Dawn Morrell, BSN, CCRN, RN, Chair
Adam Canary, LPN
Helen Myrick, Public Member
MaiKia Moua, RN, BSN, MPH

Staff: Amber Zawislak-Bielaski, MPH, Assistant Director of Licensing
Shana Johnny, MN, RN, Nurse Practice Consultant, Ad- Hoc
Karl Hoehn, JD, Assistant Director of Discipline- Legal Services
Lori Underwood, Licensing Supervisor

This meeting was digitally recorded to assist in the production of accurate minutes. All recordings are public record. The minutes of this meeting will be posted on our website after they have been approved at the **September 9, 2022**, NCQAC meeting. For a copy of the actual recording, please contact the Public Disclosure Records Center (PDRC) at PDRC@doh.wa.gov.

I. 1:00 PM Opening – Dawn Morrell, BSN, CCRN, RN Subcommittee Chair

- **Roll Call**
- **Call to Order** - Commissioner Dawn Morrell, Commissioner Adam Canary, Commissioner Helen Myrick, Commissioner Yvonne Strader, Ms. Amber Zawislak-Bielaski, Dr. Shannon Johnny, Mr. Karl Hoehn, Ms. Lori Underwood

II. Standing Agenda Items

- **Announcements/Hot Topic/NCQAC Business Meeting Updates** - Commissioner Morrell asked the committee if there were any topics to be discussed. Commissioner Morrell shared with the committee that she had the opportunity to join the Licensing unit for their summer potluck and was able to meet licensing staff and their families. Commissioner Morrell spent some time visiting with staff and thanking them for their hard work. No other topics were brought forward.
- **Approve Minutes for June 21, 2022** - Commissioner Myrick moved with a second from Commissioner Strader to approve the minutes for June 21, 2022.

III. Old Business

- **Florida School Issues and Current Actions** – Ms. Underwood shared with the committee that there were no new updates.
- **Temporary Practice Permit Rules** – Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski advised the committee that another Rules Workshop was held last Thursday, August 4, 2022. She shared that there were a few attendees, and it went well. There were no comments from the public at this workshop. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski advised

the committee that there will be one more Rules Workshop before we bring this information to the full Commission.

IV. New Business

- Governor's Weekly Report – Ms. Underwood reviewed the Governor's report explaining that our average pending applications are slowly declining. She pointed out that the applications were down to nine hundred, twenty-three last week. Ms. Underwood also shared that the average days to process applications and issue a Temporary Practice Permit was at nine days. She explained that we have hired an additional five non-perm staff to assist with the workload. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski added that our trend is appearing to head in a downward direction compared to March and April. Commissioner Morrell asked the committee if there were any questions regarding the report. Commissioner Myrick inquired if the calls are slowing down. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski replied that the volume of calls tends to correlate directly with how many applications we have pending and how many days we are at for processing time. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski also shared that because we have additional phone staff, they answer on average about forty calls per day. This is good in comparison to earlier in the year when we would have fewer staff on phones, and they would average eighty to ninety calls each per day. Commissioner Myrick wanted to acknowledge that although the numbers were going down, they were still quite high, and she thanked the staff for continuing to work hard.

Commissioner Morrell wanted to review the second chart. Ms. Underwood pointed out that this second chart addresses the renewals and applications. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski reviewed the second chart with the committee and explained that this chart displays the output. She explained that the first chart reflects what's coming in, and the second chart focuses on how many applications we are issuing. Commissioner Morrell inquired about the Emergency Volunteers and if we were still seeing these. Ms. Underwood confirmed that WAserv was still sending lists of volunteers for us to provide a credential check. She further explained that although we are continuing to see 70.15 Volunteer lists to review, there aren't many on these lists. Commissioner Morrell questioned why we continue to see this volunteer lists even as we are headed towards the end of the Emergency. Ms. Underwood offered her thoughts that it is the staffing agencies telling these travel nurses to submit their volunteer application with WAserv and submit their online application with the Nursing Commission to see which would get through quicker. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski added that as soon as the Governor lifts the state of Emergency, these nurses practicing under the 70.15 volunteer program would not be able to practice without a Washington state license. For applicants who have a Temporary Practice Permit, those are only good for six months with a one-time extension. These applicants would have needed to complete their FBI fingerprint background checks before we can issue their full license. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski also added that the six-month timeframe is what we are reviewing in the Rules Workshop. We are looking at what the timeframe should be now that we are issuing the temporary permits at a much quicker turnaround. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski continued to explain that with how quickly the fingerprint process can be completed, it would be in our best interest to limit the number of days of a Temporary Practice Permit down to sixty or ninety days, and perhaps a thirty-day extension. These are being discussed in the Rules Workshop.

Commissioner Morrell asked the committee if anyone had heard anything about the ending of the Emergency proclamation. No one in the committee had a reply. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski did share that she had a meeting with Ms. Kim Butowicz, who works with the Volunteer Management Team and Ms. Butowicz advised that they were hopeful to receive notice from the Governor's office with enough time to sunset their program and demobilize. She would then share that information with our licensing unit. Mr. Hoehn added to this conversation that we have been asked certain questions regarding the Governor's Declaration and how it affects our current waivers and Emergency rules. Commissioner Morrell asked Mr. Hoehn if it was decided how it would affect the licensing. Mr. Hoehn explained that he was not seeing much. There are several waivers that the Governor made back in 2020 that we would just rather it go away. He further explained that he had not seen anything that looked worrisome.

Commissioner Strader had a follow up question regarding the Volunteer 70.15 program. She was concerned about what happens when the program ends. Commissioner Strader inquired on what time frames the nurse will have to finish up their assignment. Would there be a set deadline, or would there be a few months' notice? Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski explained the Volunteer 70.15 program and that we had been sending out communication since earlier in the year that encouraged nurses to submit their application because when the Emergency ends, they will no longer be able to practice. She referenced the first chart where we saw a huge spike in applications. We believe these high numbers were a result of the communication we sent out. Commissioner Morrell asked the committee if there were any other questions. There were no other questions.

- **Using NURSYS NCLEX Registration Data tab for missing education information when reviewing endorsement applications** – Ms. Underwood provided some background to this issue. She explained that this issue pertains to endorsement applications. On the NURSYS verification report, it provides the verification of the applicant's exam state, all their licenses, any discipline issues, and their education. We use this report to confirm their license and education information. This issue we have is regarding the education provided on the NURSYS verification report. Ms. Underwood continued to explain that sometimes the exam state will not provide the complete education information on the verification report. They may have left off the degree awarded when they completed their program, or they may have left off the graduation date. When this occurs, we will send a speed memo via NURSYS to the exam state Board of Nursing. Many times, we do not see a reply to these requests for quite a while. This information that we are trying to obtain may also be found on the NCLEX data tab of NURSYS. Quite a few years back, we had reached out to NCSBN to confirm that we could use the education listed on the NCLEX data tab to complete the missing education information on the report. We have been using the education information found on the NCLEX data tab in the review, rather than waiting for the speed memo replies, which sometimes took several weeks to receive. This would allow us to push the files through review and be able to issue their temporary permit or license. Most recently, we discovered that the education listed on the NCLEX data tab was not provided by the exam state; rather, it is provided by the applicant. Ms. Underwood also explained that this impacts about thirty-five to forty percent of the endorsement applications. We brought this issue to Executive Director, Ms. Paula Meyer, and she directed

us to present this issue to the Licensing subcommittee for recommendation. Should we continue the process as we have been following for the past years, or revert to sending speed memos and wait for their responses? Commissioner Morrell asked the committee for any comments. Commissioner Myrick inquired if we have confidence in the reliability of using the NCLEX data tab for the education information. Ms. Underwood responded that we do have confidence in the education provided in the NCLEX data tab as we cross reference the application and the education tab in NURSYS as well. Commissioner Myrick commented on how thorough our review is of the application; however, she questioned if we legally have authority to decide if we just want to continue with the same process. Commissioner Morrell asked Mr. Hoehn for his recommendation. Mr. Hoehn advised that this may be addressed in the Executive Officer meeting happening later this month. Commissioner Morrell asked additional questions on how review staff review education to ensure it is not fraudulent. Ms. Underwood explained the review process in more detail. Mr. Hoehn also added how vigilant our licensing review staff is since these questionable schools surfaced. Commissioner Canary suggested we continue with the same process until after the Executive Officer meeting, then we could talk about this again. Commissioner Myrick and Commissioner Strader agreed with Commissioner Canary. Commissioner Morrell added that she also agreed.

Commissioner Morrell advised of another licensing issue to discuss. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski explained that this relates to the personal data questions included on the applications. She further explained that we wanted to add this to the agenda for discussion as it needs to be reviewed for HELMS because the project management team is currently in the process of building these applications. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski pointed out that these questions need to be reviewed and if there were any updates, it would need to be changed now before these applications are added in the new system. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski shared the application document with the personal data questions for the committee to review and edit. Each question was read aloud, reviewed and any edits were noted. Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski advised that this document with the edits would be forwarded to the Discipline subcommittee. Then it will be brought to the full Commission in September.

V. Ending Items

- **Public Comment** - Commissioner Morrell asked if there were any questions from our guests. Mr. Peumeu stated that he is a staffing coordinator and had questions regarding the processing time of four nurses from Florida. He hired these nurses through WAserv, and they have been waiting for about three months to be licensed. He inquired if there was a different process because they came from Florida. Mr. Hoehn responded to his question by explaining that if he was inquiring about any cases, it is dealt with other panels of the Commission. Mr. Hoehn also explained the two pathways for which a nurse could practice, RCW 70.15 and applying for licensure. He also explained that if the nurse applied for a Washington credential, their application will be reviewed and a decision would be made, but it would not be appropriate to discuss in a public meeting. Mr. Peumeu replied that he was not inquiring about the individual nurses, rather, the processing of their application. Are these applications processed different because they are coming from Florida? Ms.

Zawislak-Bielaski replied to his question by explaining the licensing review process and requirements. Mr. Peumeu thanked Ms. Zawislak-Bielaski for her explanation.

- **Review of Actions** - None
- **Meeting Evaluation** - None
- **Date of Next Meeting** - October 18, 2022
- **Adjournment:** 2:20 PM

