

PRIMARY CARE ADVISORY COUNCIL (PCAC)
MINUTES
September 27, 2016
11:00 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carson City:

Nancy Hook

Las Vegas:

Dr. Amir Qureshi, Chair

Call-In:

Dr. Susan VanBeuge, Vice Chairperson

Gerald Ackerman

Elizabeth Aiello

Catherine O'Mara

Charles Duarte

COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED:

None

DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH STAFF PRESENT:

Cody Phinney, Administrator, Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Laura Hale, Manager, Primary Care Workforce Development Office (PCWDO)

Scott Jones, Manager, Primary Care Office (PCO)

Veronica Sheldon, Primary Care Workforce Development Office (PCWDO)

OTHERS:

Linda Anderson, Deputy Attorney General

Dr. Amani Altamimi

Patricia Schroeder, Nevada Health Centers

Julie Clyde, Nevada Health Centers

Dr. Qureshi called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

1. Roll call and confirmation of quorum.

S. Jones read the roll call and stated there was a quorum present.

2. Approval of the minutes from the July 11, 2016 meeting of the PCAC.

No questions or comments.

Motion: Charles Duarte

Second: Dr. Susan VanBeuge

Motion passed unanimously

3. Recommendation to the Administrator for the Division of Public and Behavioral Health regarding J-1 Physician Visa Waiver Letter of Support for Dr. Amani Altamimi

S. Jones presented a summary (handout) of Dr. Amani Altamimi's application.

G. Ackerman stated he was in support of the application, but due to his membership on the Board for Nevada Health Centers, he would abstain from the vote due to ethical concerns.

Motion: Nancy Hook
Second: Betsy Aiello
G. Ackerman abstained
Motion passed unanimously

4. Process for informational items related to the Conrad 30/J-1 Physician Visa Wavier program and other functions of the Primary Care Office

S. Jones presented a summary (handout) on the review process for J-1 Visa waiver candidates to transfer between employer sites or specialties and the Statutes and roles of the DPBH Administrator and Advisory Council.

Dr. Qureshi stated he had a question about item #3 on the handout, asking if the Administrator has the authority to approve or reject a transfer of a J-1 participant without the Advisory Council input.

S. Jones stated that the Administrator can request that the Advisory Council make a recommendation, although she has authority over the program.

B. Aiello stated that the PCO had stated that there were quite a few transfers lately, pointed out that the handout stated all transfers would be reviewed by the PCAC and asked if there were transfers to report. She stated that she was curious as to why participants are requesting transfers.

S. Jones stated that Agenda Item #5 would review the transfers that had taken place.

C. Duarte stated that he would like to follow up on Dr. Qureshi's question. He asked if the waiver transfer review process did not meet regulatory requirements if it would be denied at the Administrator level and without PCAC having to provide input.

S. Jones stated that is not the PCO's decision, the PCO would have the Administrator review any non-compliance issues and make a determination whether the PCAC would need to weigh in on the transfer.

C. Duarte asked if the PCAC would have information as to what is not in compliance when the council reviews the transfers.

S. Jones replied that every application is accompanied with documentation of compliance with the program requirements, the regulations, the statutes and the policies. The PCO reviews each application to verify compliance with the program.

G. Ackerman asked if there were employers that had egregiously violated program policies and if so, if these employers would be suspended from the ability to apply for future applications.

S. Jones replied that the transfer requests he has seen have been candidates transferring to a new location with the same employer or a change of specialty and there were no violations in either of those cases. The reference in the document to violations is a reason a candidate could be transferred, but it is not the reason that the transfers are being reviewed by the PCAC today.

L. Hale responded that employment issues were the reason that oversight of the program was strengthened and regulations put into place. Depending on the nature and level of the program violation a fine could be levied or the individual employer would be restrained from participation in the program. No suspensions from program participation to date have been necessary. L. Hale continued that the particular employer that was involved with program incidents in 2008-09 is eligible to participate, and no suspension from the program has been enforced

at this time. The employer history would be included in any future presentation to the Council and to the Administrator, should an application be received.

C. Phinney stated that she met with L. Hale and S. Jones to review the policies earlier in the week the goal being to create maximum transparency for the Council to allow her to obtain as much feedback from the Council for consideration, allowing as much public input as was possible.

Dr. Qureshi stated that he had knowledge of the transfers that were going to be reviewed during the next Agenda item because he has spoken to some of the physicians involved, and that the Council will see that the transfers have nothing to do with violations, the transfers are due to contractual changes and technical grounds.

G. Ackerman stated that he understands that the current transfers are not due to violations, but he wanted to point out while the Council was looking at policies, that there should be a way that the Council, PCO and Administrator to exclude offenders from participation.

L. Hale stated that this is all defined in the regulations.

5. Informational item on transfer of Conrad 30/J-1 Physician Visa Waiver program participants.

S. Jones presented a summary (handout) of the transfers of 3 physicians, Dr. Razmig Kratljan, Dr. Jacqueline King, and Dr. Karam Bateiha.

***Dr. Qureshi asked if the first candidate, Dr. Kratljan, had started working at the new location.

S. Jones replied that the contract continued through with no breaks in employment.

Dr. Qureshi stated that he works with InPatient Consultants (IPC) and Sunrise Hospital and to his knowledge, Dr. Kratljan had not started working at the new location.

L. Hale stated that IPC had indicated that the previous contract would end on one day and the new contract would begin the next day without a break in employment. L. Hale stated that the PCO would follow up to verify.

*****Follow-Up to Dr. Qureshi's Question:** IPC confirmed with S. Jones on September 30, 2016, that Dr. Kratljan is set to begin his obligation at the new location, Sunrise Hospital, in the first half of October 2016.

6. Update on staff, grants and regulations.

S. Jones stated that this year has been a great year for new applications for the J-1 Visa Waiver Program. The PCO had 9 applications submitted to the office, which is the largest number of applications received in 6 years. The PCO recently completed an update to the Nevada J-1 waiver policies based on updates to statute and regulation. The updated included some important policy revisions that were reviewed with the PCAC last year during council meetings. This updates are now available for review online at the PCO website, and a technical bulletin was issued to stakeholders outlining the updates to statute, regulation and policy.

The Primary Care Office recently expanded from 2 to 4 employees. This larger office is now called the Primary Care Workforce Development Office. Laura Hale was promoted to direct this office, and Scott Jones was promoted to manage the Primary Care Office, which is within the Primary Care Workforce Development Office. With the additional FTE, the PCO can not only continue to work with the J-1 Visa Waiver Program, the NHSC, designations and the Nurse Corps, the office can also work to coordinate improvement of other workforce issues. Veronica Sheldon was hired as a management analyst in the office, and the PCO is currently hiring a health resource analyst position.

7. Public Comment.

No public comments were made.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.