

## **BOARD OF MEDICAL STUDENT LOANS**

Minutes of the meeting of May 6, 2016

The Board of Medical Student Loans held an open public meeting on **May 6, 2016** by teleconference at **four locations**: The University of Arizona Health Sciences Center, Health Sciences Library, Room 2141, 1501 N. Campbell Avenue, **Tucson, AZ 85724**; The University of Arizona, College of Medicine, Room C402, Health Sciences Education Building (HSEB), 550 E. Van Buren Street, **Phoenix, AZ 85004**; A. T. Still University, School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona, Mustang Conference Room, 5850 E. Still Circle, **Mesa, AZ 85206**, and Midwestern University, Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine, Room 234, Glendale Hall, 19555 N. 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue, **Glendale, AZ 85308**. The locations in Tucson, Phoenix and Mesa were connected via videoconference. The location at Midwestern University in Glendale was connected via telephone conference call due to video difficulties.

Board members in attendance at the videoconference included Chairperson Ross Kosinski, Ph.D., Amy Mitchell, M.D. and Amy Waer, M.D. in Tucson, AZ; Shirley Rheinfelder, M.D., and Gordi Khera, M.D. in Glendale; Stanley Brysacz, D.O. and Jeff Morgan, D.O. in Mesa and Patricia Tarango in Phoenix. All board members were in attendance.

Support staff present included: Sherri McClellan, Program Coordinator in Tucson; Ana Roscetti, Workforce Section Manager, Bureau of Health Systems Development, Arizona Department of Health Services in Phoenix; Deborah Ross-Carter, Assistant Director, Student Financial Services, A.T. Still University in Phoenix; and Filippo Chiarenza of Midwestern University Student Financial Services in Glendale.

The minutes of the meeting of October 30, 2015 have been distributed to the Board for review.

**Chairperson Kosinski called the meeting to order at 1:04pm.** Patricia Tarango (non-voting member) was not present initially due to telecommunication issues at the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix. She and Ana Roscetti were included in the meeting at 1:22 pm when the telecommunication difficulties were resolved.

The meeting began as each person in attendance introduced him or herself.

Chairperson Kosinski called the first agenda item for **approval of the meeting minutes** from October 30, 2015. Dr. Brysacz moved to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes was seconded by Dr. Khera, and all voting members were unanimous to approve.

The Board reviewed the updates of **referrals with the Attorney General** as Chairperson Kosinski listed them from the agenda. **O. Dianna Bell** owes approximately \$9,700, making regular payments to the Attorney General. **Allison Castro, M.D.** owes approximately \$182, 650 and has signed an agreement to make payments of \$1,000.00 per month, increasing payments to 1,200.00 per month in August 2016, and increasing again to \$2,000.00 per month in August 2017 until the debt is paid in full. **Claudia Chavez** pays \$250 per month toward a settlement agreement.

**David Damstra, M.D.** remains in active duty in the military, owing \$62,500 including interest and liquidated damages. He graduated from medical school in 1990, borrowing \$3,000 per semester for a total of \$24,000 in loans. He now owes approximately \$63,000 which includes interest and \$5,000 of liquidated damages. Dr. Brysacz asked during the last meeting with concerns about interest accrual on Dr. Damstra's loans, considering that he is serving in the military. Chairperson Kosinski reported that Dr. Damstra's file includes minutes from a meeting in 1996 when the Board discussed this very issue. Dr. Damstra signed a contract with the Navy and therefore had two service commitments. At that time, the Board agreed to waive interest on his loans until October 1997, when his initial commitment with the Navy was completed. The Soldier and Sailor Act of 1940 (revised by President Bush in 2002 & 2007) may prevent the Attorney General's office from requiring any payment from Dr. Damstra while he is serving in the military. The Attorney General liaison to the Board has advised that the Board has some discretion within the statutes, however Dr. Damstra would need to be forthcoming and request action from the Board and provide documentation in support of a request to readdress service and/or repayment options. Dr. Brysacz asked for clarification on the action the Board took in 1996. Sherri McClellan explained that Dr. Damstra received \$24,000 in loans through the Arizona Medical Student Loan Program (AMSLP). Following his graduation in 1990, interest was waived during his 3-year residency, and the Board agreed to waive the interest for an additional 4 years during his commitment to the Navy. Interest was waived for 7 years until 1997, and has been accruing since then. The Board expected that Dr. Damstra would fulfill his Navy contract and then address his commitment to the State; however, he voluntarily reenlisted and has made a long career in the Navy. The Board referred Dr. Damstra to the Attorney General for collection in 2001. Dr. Brysacz asked if Dr. Damstra's time in the Navy as a physician gives him any credit for service. Chairperson Kosinski answered that the statutes stipulate service to the people of Arizona, and he has not been in Arizona. Dr. Khera asked if the Board has the authority to revisit the interest accrual on the loan. Chairperson Kosinski answered that it was his understanding that the Board could revisit the time served. Dr. Brysacz stated that the question of Dr. Damstra serving the people of Arizona was debatable. In his view, Dr. Brysacz believed that Dr. Damstra's service is to the nation, and Arizona is one of the 50 states. Chairperson Kosinski replied that the attorney advised that, under the statutes, the Board could revisit this issue, but the Board has no authority to do so without cause. Dr. Damstra would have to come forward with a request and documentation. He stated that the Board could reach out to Dr. Damstra in the form of an administrative contact and find out what his plans were concerning his debt to the State. Dr. Khera voiced his support for contacting Dr. Damstra, requesting an update. Dr. Khera felt that if there was something the Board could do, that the Board should help him. Chairperson Kosinski said that the Board could certainly follow-up with Dr. Damstra and discuss the issue further at the next meeting. **Dr. Brysacz wasn't sure if was necessary, however he made a motion to make contact with Dr. Damstra and ask what he plans to do. Dr. Khera seconded the motion.** Dr. Morgan stated that, as a veteran himself, when an officer comes to the point of reenlisting, they can be presented with financial incentives, which could be considered by the board depending on the circumstances. Chairperson Kosinski called a vote to make contact with Dr. Damstra. **All voting members were in favor of making administrative contact with Dr. Damstra.**

Chairperson Kosinski continued with the cases with the Attorney General. **Juan Hernandez**, who was dismissed from medical school in March 2011, currently pays an adjusted \$300 per month until July 2016, when his repayments will return to \$500 per month. His current balance is approximately \$227,000. **Aileen Lo, M.D.** resigned from her Internal Med/Pediatrics residency during PGY-2 then entered an unapproved

residency in Clinical Preventative Medicine. Dr. Lo is in an agreement with the Attorney General's Office and is making regular payments of \$750.00 per month. In September 2016, the payment will increase to \$1,500.00 per month until the debt is paid in full. Her current balance is approximately \$420,000. The Attorney General continues to seek judgment against **Juanita Padilla, M.D.** An evaluation is being done to refer the pursuit to a contracted attorney in Colorado (known as an Out of State Referral). Dr. Padilla owes approximately \$213,000 in principal, interest and liquidated damages. **Rey Palop, M.D.** continues to make regular payments of \$3,000 per month towards his balance of approximately \$16,000.

The meeting continued with **participant requests and updates.**

The Board previously approved **Dr. Janet Vargas** to open a private practice in psychiatry and substance abuse. She submitted notarized self-certification from her private practice, Ryberson Consulting, located at 1637 E. Prince Road, Tucson AZ 85719. She **requests approval of 2,159 hours of service** from February 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015 towards her 5-year (10,000 hour) service commitment. Chairperson Kosinski called for a motion to approve her hours. Dr. Mitchell motioned to approve. Dr. Khera seconded the motion. Before the vote was taken, Dr. Rheinfelder wanted to remind the Board that Dr. Vargas is self-certifying and is not board-certified and is therefore not able to accept insurance. Dr. Rheinfelder continued to say that the majority of her patients were expected to be cash patients, and also that she would be treating some patients pro-bono. Chairperson Kosinski stated that Dr. Vargas is serving that underserved population. Sherri McClellan recalled Dr. Vargas stating that she was receiving patient referrals from a women's group, "Angels' Wings" or something to that effect which helped women with past addictions get back into the workforce. Dr. Rheinfelder also expressed concern that Dr. Vargas' office manager is her husband. Chairperson Kosinski recalled that the Board had previously approved the process for certification. Dr. Khera also recalled the Board agreeing to Dr. Vargas' private practice as she is conducting it and that Dr. Vargas is serving as the Board agreed. Chairperson Kosinski called for the vote, and **all were unanimously in favor to approve 2,159 hours of service.**

*(At 1:22 pm, board member, Patricia Tarango was connected to the meeting from Phoenix during the discussion regarding Dr. Vargas.)*

Chairperson Kosinski continued with the updates. **C. Michelle Martin, D.O.** fulfilled her service obligation, submitting certification of 3 years of Family Practice at Healthy Life Family Medicine in Goodyear beginning November 1, 2012 and continuing through January 27, 2016. In February 2015, **Maurice Lee, M.D.** took the position of Medical Director with St. Vincent de Paul Medical Clinic in Phoenix with the Board's approval. Dr. Lee sent certification of his employment at St. Vincent de Paul and wrote to the Board with an update of the progress which the clinic has made to better provide healthcare to the medically-underserved people. **Valerie Miranda, M.D.** continues working towards her 3-year (6,000-hour) commitment in General Medicine in an Urgent Care setting at HPSA/MUA/P locations of FastMed Urgent Care in the Phoenix area. She has 5,140 Board-approved hours of completed service between August 23, 2012 and August 8, 2015. Email communication with Dr. Miranda suggested that she will be completed with her final 590 service hours before the Board's next meeting in Fall 2016. **Mariposa Wolford, M.D.** wrote to the Board with an update regarding her 3-year service commitment at El Rio Community Health Center where she has worked as a full-time physician in Pediatrics since September 2013. She started at the Pascua Yaqui Clinic and is now also working at the El Rio-Southwest Pediatrics Clinic where she spends most of her time. Her anticipated completion date has been adjusted to December 2016 due to maternity leave taken during her service. **Michelle Aguilar, M.D.** submitted her employment

certification from the Southwest Clinic at El Rio Community Health Center where she continues progress on her 4-year service commitment as a full-time Pediatrician. She started there in November 2013, and with having taken approximately five months off for maternity leave, is expected to fulfill her commitment in April 2018. **Darrell Brimhall, M.D.** provided certification for his continued employment with Summit Healthcare at Snowflake-Taylor Family Medicine where he has been full-time since July 8, 2014. His 4-year service commitment is expected to be completed in July 2018. **J. Gabriel Martinez, D.O.** has been working as a full-time physician in Pediatrics at Mountain Park Family Health Center, a Federally-Qualified Health Center, in Phoenix. He provided certification for his employment there since July 2014. His 4-year commitment is expected to be completed in July 2018. **Melinda Valichnac-Feely, M.D.** continues to work full-time at Gila Valley Clinic in Safford. She began there in August 2013, practicing as a Family Medicine physician with Obstetrics. Her 4-year service commitment is expected to be fulfilled in August 2017. **Monica Viteri-Giordano, D.O.** submitted certification for her full-time service as a physician in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at Banner Health Ironwood in San Tan Valley, AZ where she has been since September 2013. Dr. Viteri-Giordano is expected to complete her service in September 2017. **Jonathan Willms, D.O.** provided certification from Sun Life Family Health Center's Center for Women in Casa Grande. He has been a full-time physician in Obstetrics there since July 2014. His 3-year service commitment is expected to be completed in July 2017.

Dr. Brysacz commented on El Rio Community Health Center, which is the service site for some of the AMSLP recipients. He said that El Rio has an affiliation with A.T. Still SOMA and does an excellent job of serving the population of Tucson and nearby areas.

For the administrative update, Chairperson Kosinski reviewed the agency's Sunset, continuing the Board until July 2017 and repealing the Board in January 2018. The Board no longer receives State funds. Until the Sunset, the Board continues as charged overseeing the AMSLP just as it has done in this meeting. Any payments to the Board through the Attorney General are now going to the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) which was requested by the Board in 2010. Chairperson Kosinski pointed out that the agenda incorrectly stated that the SLRP received additional funds when the State allowed the program to broaden its scope of practitioners. Patricia Tarango confirmed that the SLRP received no additional funding. She stated that the loan repayments which the Attorney General is collecting are appreciated. The funds are being well-utilized to fund more providers in the State. Ana Roscetti makes sure that the awards are given out and that there is sufficient recruitment and advertising of the SLRP. Chairperson Kosinski asked about the amounts awarded to SLRP participants. Ana answered those questions. Physicians and dentists may receive up to \$65,000 for a 2-year contract. Other practice types, such as Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants, may receive up to \$50,000 for a 2-year commitment. SLRP may now increase awards for continuation of contracts to up to \$35,000 for physicians and dentists for one year, and \$25,000 per year for other practice types. Also, they can now offer higher amounts as incentives to physicians in areas of the greatest need, including the higher HPSA-scored areas and the rural areas. Additionally, preference is given to physicians who completed their medical education (not residency/medical training) in Arizona. Chairperson Kosinski stated that he thought physicians who completed their residency in Arizona would be likely to stay in Arizona. He asked if they could apply. Ana answered that they could apply, however preference points are given to applicants who completed medical school or post graduate education in Arizona. Dr. Morgan asked if the funding for the SLRP is dependent upon the AMSLP debt payments made to the Attorney General. Patricia answered no. The standing budget for the SLRP is \$850,000, and all of that money is used for

awards. Any monies that come in from the collection of funds by the Attorney General augment that \$850,000. This past year, the AMSLP collections added \$150,000 plus to that amount. 100% of these loans are used for SLRP awards.

Chairperson Kosinski talked of the letter received regarding an upcoming Sunset Review this summer at some point. There are no details exactly when that will take place. A Committee of Reference will go over the Sunset Review with the Board. Questions to answer are anticipated. If there is a need, an additional meeting of the Board may be called. Patricia Tarango said that it would be good for her to know when the Sunset Review is to begin so that she can let the legislative liaison for ADHS know.

Chairperson Kosinski said to Patricia Tarango that one of the recommendations given at the last Sunset Review was that ADHS possibly track the remainder of the recipients until completion after the Board is repealed. Is that a possibility, he asked. She said that this may be a challenge due to a hiring freeze, and Ana has lost support on seven programs which she oversees. Resources are very tight at the department. There should be some discussion regarding what that tracking involves and how many participants remain to be tracked, and then see if they are able to do it. Chairperson Kosinski believes it will be only a handful. Patricia stated that it would be a good idea to have the projected list of participants after the Sunset Review and what the administration of these continuing participants entails. Dr. Rheinfelder stated that, looking at the minutes from the last meeting, the last participant is expected to complete service in 2020.

With the agenda items addressed, Chairperson Kosinski opened the floor to other items or comments. Dr. Mitchell had one question about **Scott Salmon, D.O.** who was mentioned at the last meeting. She recalled that the Attorney General closed his case, and asked if there was any follow-up from them stating a reason. Sherri McClellan stated that she had requested documentation of a reason, however they simply said that they closed the case.

With the agenda completed and no further discussions, Dr. Khera moved to adjourn. Dr. Mitchell seconded the motion, and all were in favor to adjourn. **The meeting was adjourned at 1:44 pm.**

Minutes are available for review on this day, May 11, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,



Sherri McClellan  
Program Coordinator  
Board of Medical Student Loans

Approved:



Ross Kosinski, Ph.D.  
Chairperson  
Board of Medical Student Loans