

BOARD OF HEARING AID DEALERS AND FITTERS

Minutes of September 19, 2000 Board Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gilbert Poliquin established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

Members Present: Sallie Chisholm; George M. Davis, Jr., Public Member; Linda Snow, Complaint Officer; Robert Bruder, Public Member Gilbert Poliquin, Chairperson; Wanda Creed, Dawn Dufkin Britt

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Elaine Thibodeau, Administrator; Dennis Smith, AAG; Jackie Thibodeau, Board Clerk

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 15, 2000 MINUTES

George Davis moved to approve August 15, 2000 minutes. Seconded by Robert Bruder
Vote: Favor-5 Opposed-0.

APPLICATION REVIEW

The Board approved a trainee permit for Sandra McCoy pending receipt of two business and two character references. The Board also decided to accept training hours completed out of state as long as the supervisor signs off on the training form.

REVIEW MEETING CONDUCT

George Davis proposed arranging the agenda so that the "professional items" be completed last. Gil Poliquin stated that agenda items do not necessarily have to be presented in the order that they are listed. When he is notified that someone needs to leave early he will present agenda items that need a vote first. Gil asked if the conduct of the meetings should be more formal. The members felt that the meetings work well in an informal setting. Linda Snow suggested that a time limit should be set for items and kept. This would keep the discussions on track and possibly keep the meeting to a minimum.

PROGRESS ON SEMINAR BROCHURE AND MAILING

The Board reviewed the brochure. Minor changes were recommended. The brochure will be mailed out to licensees as soon as possible.

RULE/STATUTE DISCREPANCY

Elaine reported that she had submitted a proposal for legislation, to be incorporated into a bill -- intended to make adjustments to several boards' statutes -- to make 32 MRS §1658-C(4)(D) consistent with §1658-B by deleting the reference in it to the retention of 10% of the purchase price in the event of a refund, this having been deleted from §1658-B through previous legislation. §1658-C concerns the notice which must be provided to the purchaser before, or at the time, the hearing aid is purchased.

As currently written, §1658-C(4) does not reference the first 30-day component of the 60 day trial period during which eligibility for a refund is not conditioned upon a written opinion from an audiologist or a licensed physician attesting to the unsuitability of the hearing aid in question for the patient, although this provision is contained in §1658-C(4)(D). Consequently, notices currently in-use do not necessarily provide this information.

Elaine will be developing language in consultation with Gil and AAG Dennis Smith.

REPORT ON IHS SEMINAR IN ANAHEIM, CA

Sally presented information learned at the IHS seminar. She stated that Songbird (disposable hearing aid) had a booth at the conference. They have received approval from the FDA, which is surprising, because the hearing aids only have lot numbers, and not serial numbers. Songbird is now approaching state licensing boards and asking for approval. The board engaged in a discussion of how they would regulate Songbird or any other mail order companies which are not dispensers of hearing aids.

Sally mentioned that IHS would like to have uniformity in regulations across the 50 states. Maine falls on the conservative side and other states are very strict. IHS has been working on this for many years.

There is a coalition comprised of a group of audiologists that is promoting legislation to prohibit Hearing Aid Dispensers from doing fittings. However, there is a clause in the proposal that would allow the final decision to be made by each state's regulatory board.

A "Hearing Instrument Specialist" Associate-degree program getting underway in Washington State, at Spokane Falls Community College and Bates Technical College in Tacoma. Twenty-six people are enrolled this fall. This will be offered as a distance learning course as well.

MISCELLANEOUS

The regular oral exam will be administered in October due to insufficient time to make up scripts for the new oral exam, as discussed at the last meeting. The Board will still proceed with making ear molds for the two public members to be used for the May exam.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTARY

Elaine --

- reported that it would be possible to reimburse speakers for their presentations at the seminar, but that they would need to complete vendor forms. Gil indicated, however, that the presenters may not require reimbursement, if the customary \$75 attendance fee is waived.

- reviewed the budget process and how the monies collected from registration fees for the seminar are applied to revenue and the bills are applied to the operating expenses.
- announced that Vickey Gray has replaced Kelly Webster as the new Complaint Clerk; kelly having accepted a position with another state agency.
- distributed the health insurance complaint report and consumer guide published by the Bureau of Insurance; this guide can be given to consumers who are having reimbursement issues.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:15p.m.
The next scheduled meeting is October 17, 2000.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Thibodeau
Board Clerk