

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
STATE BOARD FOR RESPIRATORY THERAPY**

Meeting Minutes

Thursday October 14, 2021

10:00-12:00 PM

WebEx conference

Board Members present by WebEx: Stanley John, RT, Chairperson; Kathleen Beney, RT, Vice Chairperson; Rebecca Albright, RT; Cynthia Gottlieb, RT; Edward Schrager, RT; Thomas McManus, RT; Peter Papadakos, MD; Barbara Deluca, RT; Russell Rozensky, RT; Kevin Brinson, RT

Extended Members present by WebEx/phone: Steven Smith, RT; Paul Goldiner, MD

Guest: Thomas Harvie, President, New York State Society of Respiratory Care (NYSSRC); Chris Slocum, Government Affairs Chair, NYSSRC; Sheri Tooley, President Elect, American Association Respiratory Care (AARC)

Board Office Staff: Suzanne Sullivan, RN, Acting Executive Secretary; Ann Bentzen, Associate in Nursing Education; Eileen Avery, Assistant in Nursing Education

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

The RT Board approved Minutes from prior meetings with changes.

Reports and Discussions:

RT Board Members discussed current CDC guidance relating to vaccination to prevent COVID-19. They also discussed New York State's requirement that healthcare workers who provide patient care in hospitals and nursing homes be vaccinated against COVID-19 as well as medical exemptions to this vaccination requirement. They discussed whether the mandate would have an adverse impact on the existing RT workforce shortage in New York State.

RT Board Members noted that RT education programs are requiring RT students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before starting clinical rotations. Board Members acknowledged that there does not appear to be many RT students who are refusing to be vaccinated against COVID 19 or requesting a vaccination exemption (religious or medical). Some RT Board Members identified patient safety concerns when unvaccinated workers provide care to acutely ill or medically vulnerable patients. Ms. Sullivan noted that NYSED allows but does not require professional education programs to accommodate students who are not vaccinated against COVID-19.

RT Board Members discussed RT workforce shortages and how to improve shortages. They noted that hospitals are overwhelmed with patients who need to be transferred to nursing homes. In addition, hospitals are losing nursing and RT staff who take higher paying "travel" jobs. RT Board Members

discussed the importance of changing the Education Law to allow graduates of New York State registered RT program to practice respiratory therapy under supervision in hospitals and other medical facilities immediately following graduation. RT Board Members believe that this law change would help to alleviate the current RT workforce shortage in New York State. Members of the RT board voted to approve the following recommendation:

“The State Board for Respiratory Therapy recommends an amendment to New York State Law or a Governor’s Executive Order to allow graduates of New York State Education Department registered respiratory therapy education programs to practice respiratory therapy under physician supervision for 180 days immediately upon graduation, provided that they have applied for a New York State Respiratory Therapy license and a limited permit, and they practice at the medical facility listed on the permit.”

RT Board Members also discussed NYSED’s licensure requirements for RTs and NBRC’s requirements for maintaining RBRC credentials.

Ms. Sullivan described a New York State bill that would require New York State licensed RTs and other health professionals to provide information relating to their professional practice each time they renew their registration to practice in New York State. The information collected would be provided to the New York State Department of Health and used in health care workforce studies.

Ms. Sullivan provided an update on RT Board membership, noting that most voting members are serving their second term and that the RT Board lacks a public member. She encouraged the Board Members to recruit candidates for the public and professional membership positions on the RT Board.

Next meeting is January 13 (if allowed by WebEx)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 AM.