

**West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Board of Governors – Emergency Meeting
Monday, February 19, 2024
Location: President’s Conference Room & via Teleconference**

I. Call to Order, Roll Call/Quorum, Mission Statement

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board Chair, Dr. Belt. Roll call was taken by Board Liaison, Ms. Green. A quorum was present. The WVSOM mission statement was read by Board Vice Chair, Dr. Morgan.

Members Present via Teleconference:

Randall Belt, D.O., Chair	Gary Poling, D.O. (arrived 5:26 p.m.)
Frederick Morgan, D.O., Vice Chair	Erin Reese
Sharon Hall	Caitlyn Santer, D.O.
Robert Holstein, D.O.	Todd Smith, D.O.
Michael Muscari, D.O.	Peter Ward, Ph.D.

Members Absent:

Thomas Cole	Marlena Kirby, Secretary
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Others in Attendance:

James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., President	Senator Tom Takubo, D.O. (arrived 5:07 p.m.; left 6:20 p.m.)
Jeffrey Shawver, J.D., Chief Legal Officer	Mike Fowler, Director, Audio, Visual & Production
Linda Boyd, D.O., Chief Academic Officer	Debbie Green, Scribe/Board Liaison
Drema Hill, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer	

II. Board Items

A. Review and consideration of Senate Bill 714, transferring duties and licensing from the Board of Osteopathic Medicine to the Board of Medicine.

Reason/Purpose: To immediately review and consider Senate Bill 714, which would transfer duties and licensing from the Board of Osteopathic Medicine to the Board of Medicine. Senate Bill 714 has already passed the West Virginia Senate and will be under immediate consideration in the West Virginia House of Delegates. The WVSOM Board of Governors must act immediately through an emergency meeting to review, consider, and address the legislation and its impact on the osteopathic profession in West Virginia.

Chair Belt thanked the Board of Governors members for attending the meeting.

Dr. Holstein requested to make a motion for discussion, and Chair Belt agreed. Dr. Holstein moved that the WVSOM Board of Governors oppose Senate Bill 714 calling for the transition of duties and functions of the West Virginia Board of Osteopathic Medicine to the West Virginia Board of Medicine. A motion was not needed in order to discuss the topic since it was listed under Board Items (Item II.A).

Mr. Shawver, Vice President for Legal, Governmental & External Affairs, Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel, stated Senator Tom Takubo, D.O. joined the meeting in order to answer questions regarding Senate Bill 714.

Extensive discussion followed which included the following:

- The efficiency of the current osteopathic medical board which does not use tax payer dollars.
- The concern of losing the distinctiveness of the osteopathic profession.
- The specific makeup of the combined board proposed in the legislation which would include 21 members consisting of the State Health Officer (ex officio with the right to vote), 12 physicians (of which would be at least 4 allopathic and 4 osteopathic), 1 podiatrist, 3 physician assistants, and 4 citizen members. All members of the combined board would be appointed by the governor. Discussion continued regarding the combined board regarding election of officers, the number needed for a quorum, and the term length of the members.
- The need for additional education of WVSOM students on the bill as well as on governmental relations topics that affect the osteopathic profession.
- The need for the West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association (WVOMA) to have more presence in Charleston and to keep the osteopathic community informed of legislative issues in West Virginia.

According to Senator Takubo, discussion regarding the idea to combine medical boards began in the fall of 2023, and the current osteopathic and allopathic medical boards collaborated on the language, policies and practices used in the bill. In addition, Senator Takubo stated he met with WVOMA and the West Virginia State Medical Association several months ago to discuss the possibility of combining the medical boards.

Senator Takubo stated Senate Bill 714 would not abolish the osteopathic medical board; but instead, the bill would collapse both the osteopathic and allopathic medical boards into one entity. Senator Takubo acknowledged the efficiency of the osteopathic medical board; and in fact, stated that a lot of the osteopathic medical board policies and practices were used when writing the language for the bill. Senator Takubo continued by saying the medical board's function is to protect the public, and the title "Board of Medicine" was used for the combined entity when drafting the legislation in order to be easily understood and accessed by the public. Senator Takubo stated the West Virginia Legislature has interest in combining boards throughout the State in order to prepare the way for digital access by the public. The current bill, unlike previous legislation which has failed, provides equal representation on the combined board for osteopathic and allopathic physicians and offers equity for the profession in West Virginia, even though allopathic physicians outnumber osteopathic physicians 8:1 in the State. Senator Takubo stated the medical board's duties are to ensure that physicians are properly licensed in West Virginia and to address complaints regarding physicians, and he believes a combined medical board with equal representation would be able to fulfill those duties. Senator Takubo stated the current allopathic medical board does not accept continuing medical education (CME) credits from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA); however, the combined medical board in Senate Bill 714 would allow all physicians (osteopathic and allopathic) to earn CME credits from either the AOA or the American Medical Association (AMA). In addition, according to Senator Takubo, members of the current osteopathic and allopathic medical boards will initially be grandfathered into the combined board so as to not lose any institutional knowledge, and administrative

personnel of both current medical boards will continue to be employed by the combined board.

In conclusion, Senator Takubo believes Senate Bill 714 will strengthen the osteopathic profession and embolden osteopathic medical students.

After Senator Takubo left the meeting, discussion continued. Dr. Holstein withdrew his previous motion in order for an alternate motion to be introduced.

It was moved and seconded (Poling/Smith) to call for a vote to determine if the WVSOM Board of Governors wanted to change its neutral position regarding Senate Bill 714. A roll call vote was taken on the motion. Ms. Green called on each board member individually to vote with the following results: Belt – against; Hall – against; Holstein – for; Morgan – against; Muscari – for; Poling – for; Reese – against; Santer – against; Smith – against; Ward – against. The results were 7-3 against the motion that the WVSOM Board of Governors should change its neutral position regarding Senate Bill 714. Motion Failed


III. Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled board meeting will be held on Friday, March 29, 2024 on the Lewisburg campus of WVSOM in the Conference Center located in the WVSOM Student Center.

IV. Adjournment

It was moved and seconded (Holstein/Muscari) to adjourn. The motion carried and the board meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Approved on March 29, 2024

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Marlena R. Kirby
Secretary
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