

EMERGENCY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 18, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER.

Dr. Gutierrez called the emergency meeting of the Texas Optometry Board (TOB) to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL.

A roll call vote was taken and quorum was present for the meeting.

Mario Gutierrez, O.D.	Chair
Ronald L. Hopping, O.D.	Vice Chair
Judy Chambers	Secretary/Treasurer
Carey A. Patrick, O.D.,	Member
John Todd Cornett, O.D.	Member
Bill Thompson, O.D.	Member
Meghan Schuttte, O.D.	Member
Ty Sheehan	Member
Rene Pena	Member
Kelly Parker, Executive Director	
Vincent Pina, Executive Assistant	
Dennis McKinney, Assistant Attorney General	

Note, Ms. Chambers joined the meeting at 1:38 p.m.

3. EMERGENCY RULE: 22 TAC 273.15 EMERGENCY EXTENSION OF LICENSE DUE TO COVID-19.

Dr. Gutierrez began the discussion by thanking the licensees for their patience. He also thanked the Governor's Office, TOB Staff and Mr. McKinney for their assistance. Dr. Gutierrez asked Ms. Parker to explain the reason for the meeting and the emergency rule.

Ms. Parker explained that since December 9, 2020, the TOB Office has been impacted by several COVID-19 cases. An emergency exists to conduct the meeting because due to the COVID-19 cases, agency renewal operations have been delayed. She reported that as of Friday, December 18th, only 2,700 licensees had renewed and that still left approximately 2,200 licensees that have not yet renewed. Ms. Parker reported that she worked with the Governor's Office, Attorney General's Office and has been in contact with the State Office of Medicaid.

Further, Ms. Parker explained that the intent of the emergency rule is to grant emergency extensions for no more than 90 days for any qualified licensee who is not yet renewed as of December 31, 2020. Ms. Parker pointed out that only licensees who have met requirements such as payment and submission of CE will be extended. This extra time allows staff to process the renewal applications while allowing qualified optometrists to continue working and ensures continuity of care for patients. Dr. Patrick inquired whether the extension allows more time for licensees to complete CE. Ms. Parker clarified that pursuant to the drafted intent of the rule, licensees must complete all CE prior to December 31, 2020.

Ms. Parker stated that the TOB will not issue licenses with the emergency extension date but instead an online list will be posted weekly. The office will also issue official communication. Anyone needing verification or authorization for an emergency extension shall refer to the list.

Dr. Thompson made a motion to adopt Emergency Rule 273.15 and Dr. Patrick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Cornett made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Chambers seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:52 p.m.