

**Delaware Health Care Commission  
Delaware Institute of Dental Education and Research (DIDER)  
Board of Directors  
Wednesday, December 14, 2016  
3:00 p.m.**

**Herman Holloway Health & Social Services Campus  
Main Administration Building, Room 198, New Castle  
and  
Jesse Cooper Building, Third Floor Conference Room, Dover**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Board Members Present:** Louis Rafetto, DMD, Chair; Theodore W. Becker, Jr.; Nicholas Conte, DMD, MBA; Lisa Goss, RDH, BS; Brian McAllister, DDS; Howard W. Zucker, DDS; and Bruce Matthews, DDS

**Staff Attending:** Helen Arthur, Director of Planning and Policy, and Shebra Hall, Community Relations Officer

**Other Guests:** Diana Maurer, Dental Program Administrator, DPH

**Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

Due to recurring technical difficulties with having videoconference Board meetings, Chairman Louis Rafetto, DMD suggested that at least 2 of the quarterly Board meetings be held in person only. Ted Becker agreed that was a reasonable compromise. Board members agreed on this suggestion, and meetings will be planned accordingly.

Dr. Rafetto called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

**Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2016 and September 14, 2016**

Dr. Rafetto asked if there were suggestions for edits or changes to the meeting minutes from the February 10, 2016 and September 14, 2016 Board of Directors meetings. Hearing none, Dr. Rafetto motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Ted Becker seconded the motion. None were opposed. Motion carried.

**Update on Student Slots at Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry**

Dr. Rafetto requested a brief update on the number of DIDER students accepted this year to Temple University. Shebra Hall confirmed that 5 Delaware students were offered admittance to Temple University, with 4 students matriculating, making 15 the total number of DIDER students at Temple this year. Dr. Rafetto was aware of some background information and the GPA's of the accepted DIDER students and will share this information with the DIDER Board. He stated that this information suggests that Temple goes out of their way to honor the agreement with DIDER to accept at least 5 Delaware students in to the dental program, thus evident of the beneficial relationship Delaware has with Temple.

### **Update on State Loan Repayment Program**

Helen Arthur shared a brief update on the State Loan Repayment Program (SLRP). Due to the lack of state match funding, no new SLRP applications are being accepted at this time. The DHCC currently has enough funding in the Grant-in Aid bill to honor current contracts. There is currently one DIDER participant currently under contract. DHCC is working with their Loan Repayment Program Federal Project Officer at Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to obtain permission to revise program parameters. The revision will essentially allow required matching state funds from other eligible sources (e.g. hospitals, organizations.) This revisions request includes sending HRSA a corrective action plan and a revised budget narrative. DHCC is awaiting feedback and approval before reopening the application process, but still advocating for state dollars to match this federal funding. Ms. Arthur said that the medical institutions are aware of the possible revisions and we are awaiting outcomes from advocacy efforts. In interim, updates to the SLRP program will be posted on the DHCC website.

### **Discussion on the future of DIDER**

There have been various opportunities for DIDER advocacy initiatives. Mr. Becker and Ms. Arthur shared information on public meetings hosted by four committees of Governor-Elect John Carney's Transition Team. The public meetings will be on Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at Dover Downs, to hear the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of Delaware residents. At 9:00 am the State Budget & Workforce Committee and the Education & Healthy Families Committee will meet, and at 1:00 pm the Economic Development & Healthy Environment Committee and the Public Safety & Strong Neighborhoods Committee will meet. Dr. Rafetto expressed concern regarding lack of advanced notice of the public meetings, but will plan to attend. Ms. Arthur indicated that advocacy materials have been developed for this purpose and can be used to prepare for this meeting. The DHCC developed and shared these tools with the Board to prepare for unplanned meeting such as this, as well as other advocacy opportunities. Mr. Becker, who is on the Governor-elect Transition Team, explained the format for the public meetings and arranged for Dr. Rafetto to attend and speak on behalf of DIDER. These arrangements were confirmed by the end of the Board meeting. Ms. Hall will share the public meeting information with the DIDER Board, as well as the website for the Governor-Elect's Transition Team.

Dr. Howard Zucker attended the OMB public hearing on November 15th, where DHSS Secretary Rita Landgraf spoke for about 90 minutes in support of funding for various DHSS services. About 10 other advocates, including Dr. Zucker, had about 3 minutes to address specific programs. Dr. Zucker informed the audience about the importance of DIDER in Delaware, particularly because Delaware has no state-supported dental school. Dr. Zucker shared that DIDER is vital to the healthcare workforce and to serving the oral healthcare needs of the neediest population in the State. He shared some statistics at the hearing, including that in the last decade, 65% of the 86 DIDER dental residents have stayed to practice in Delaware. He attested to the vital importance of DIDER support to the dental residency program at Christiana Hospital. He highlighted that for the mere \$148,000 of DIDER funding, DIDER residents at Christiana are able to see roughly 11,000 of the most critical, underserved patients, that even the FQHC's cannot care for, further emphasizing the crucial need for DIDER funding.

Dr. Rafetto affirms that DIDER does tell a compelling story and stated that he was completely blindsided by the elimination of state funds. He has been conversing with Sherman Townsend, Chair of the Delaware Institute of Medical Education and Research (DIMER) Board, and working together to come up with ways to support the restoration of funding for these critical

programs. Dr. Rafetto asked for input from the Board for other ideas and suggestions to further their advocacy efforts.

Dr. Rafetto stated that he would share the advocacy letter that DHCC developed, with the Dental Society, so that its members can disseminate to legislators in support of DIDER funding. Mr. Becker suggested that individual dental practices reaching out to legislators, in a grassroots, 1:1 method, may be effective. He further suggested that it is important for DIDER to collaborate with DIMER and the Delaware Institute of Veterinary Medical Education (DIVME), with a unified message, as all 3 programs lost funding which provided reserved student slots in dental, medical, or veterinary schools; support for residency programs; loan repayment; and tuition assistance.

Dr. Bruce Matthews suggested prioritizing the objectives for the restoration of funds. There were several thoughts presented in prioritizing the various components of the DIDER program. The Board is aware that without DIDER, Delaware would be the only state in the nation without a state-supported dental school, or an articulation agreement. Having reserved slots for Delaware residents who want to obtain a high-quality dental education is imperative to addressing the need of dental professionals in the workforce in Delaware. Some suggested that supporting the residency programs is easy to advocate for, as the residency programs provide a public service; providing oral health care for the neediest Delaware patients that cannot be cared for anywhere else. Dr. Rafetto indicated that SLRP may have been more sustainable before the restructuring. Ms. Arthur explained that because of the increase in the amount of federal funding the state was awarded for SLRP, the program operates differently, with specific federally eligibility requirements. Mr. Becker states that without the state match for loan repayments, Delaware would be throwing away federal dollars, which the state should be hesitant to do. Tuition assistance had been slowly decreased over time and completely eliminated in a previous fiscal year for DIDER, and thus, may be beyond restoration. After some discussion, most agreed that the student slots at the schools are the most important; equally important are the residency programs and SLRP; and next would be tuition assistance.

Mr. Becker pointed out that the DHCC has been a strong supporter and advocate for DIDER, and indicated that Dr. Nancy Fan, DHCC Chair, provides updates and solicits support from the public at every DHCC meeting. Ms. Arthur stated that in addition to the supporters who attended the OMB public hearing, the DHCC is soliciting support from the community, and the community is responding to advocacy initiatives. It is important to continue gaining support from community leaders and stakeholders, and particularly of alumni who may have benefited from the DIDER, DIMER or DIVME programs.

***Action items:***

- DHCC staff will share the website for the Governor-Elect's Transition Team website, and information on the public meetings for Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Rafetto will attend the public meeting and share the information he presents.
- Dr. Rafetto will share advocacy letter with the State Dental Society.
- DIDER Board members will meet at least 2 times per year in person, and meet by videoconference the remaining 2 times, as needed.

### **Other Business and Board Member Updates**

Dr. Rafetto inquired about DIDER Board memberships. Ms. Hall informed him that most of the DIDER Board member terms have inspired, with the exception of Nicholas Conte, DMD, MBA, newly appointed State Dental Director, who by statute is an Ex-Officio member of the DIDER Board; Bruce Matthews, DDS, who is replacing Sharon Walsh, DDS, appointed by the State Board of Dentistry, whose term will expire 4/3/17; and Anthony Vattilana, DDS, appointed by the State Dental Society, whose term expires 11/1/17. Ms. Arthur informed the Board that until action is made by the Governor's Office, Board members are to proceed with regular business, with voting rights and active engagement. We cannot make legal recommendations, but Joanna Suder, Deputy Attorney General and legal counsel for the DIDER Board, previously advised the Board to continue their duties post term expiration dates until directives come from the Governor that indicate different actions take place. Going forward, Dr. Rafetto emphasized that he would hope for Board members that are truly committed to the DIDER program, beyond their membership appointments.

### **Adjourn**

Hearing no other business items, Dr. Rafetto motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Becker seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3:50pm.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 3pm; however, based on today's discussion, details for the next meeting are to be determined.