

Guam Board of Allied Health Examiners

REGULAR VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING

Friday, April 11, 2025 at 12:00 PM

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Meeting ID: 898 2575 1267

Passcode: 420865

MINUTES

Item		Discussion		Responsible Party	Reporting Timeframe	Status
I	Call to Order	Meeting Chaired by Dr. Balajadia		Chair	1205	Call to Order
	Proof of Publication	Guam Daily Post and Guam Public Notices Portal 04/04/25; 04/09/25		Chair	1207	Confirmed
	Roll Call	GBAHE Members <u>Present at HPLO:</u> ☑Dr. Mamie Balajadia, Clinical Psychology, Chair ☑Nadine Cepeda ☑Vince Pereda, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Vice-Chair ☑Dr. Dennis Triolo, Audiology ☑Dr. Sungwook “Steve” S. Kim, Podiatrist ☑Catherine San Nicolas, Clinical Dietitian ☑Rosalind S. Taitingfong, Occupational Therapist, Treasurer ☑Dr. Velma R. Harper, Veterinarian ☐Gregory J. Cruz, Respiratory Therapist <u>Virtual Attendance:</u> ☑Dr. Gregory Miller, Chiropractic ☑Dr. Richard Chong, ACOM ☐Ray Tajalle	Other Attendees <u>Present at HPLO:</u> Kaysie Lee, HPLO Don Sulat, HPLO <u>Virtual Attendance:</u> Brianna Sablan, HPLO Hiroshi Ishii – Adajar, Public Joseph Madlangbayan, Office of Senator Terlaje K’tanaw Hirsch, Wise Owl April Mills, Public Jonathan Lujan, DPHSS	Chair	1205	Quorum Established
II	Adoption of Agenda	Motion to Approve the Agenda: N. Cepeda; 2 nd : V. Pereda.		GBAHE	1207	Unanimously Adopted Agenda
III	Approval of Minutes	Draft Minutes dated 03/07/25 A correction was made to the name “C. Nicolas” in some areas which should read “C. San Nicolas”. Another correction was made to “Roll Call”, Dr. Chong’s credential should be ACOM. Motion to Approve as Amended: Dr. Miller; 2 nd : N. Cepeda.		GBAHE	1208	Unanimously Approved as Amended
IV	Treasurer’s Report	R. Taitingfong reported receiving updated financial information solely from the Treasurer of Guam, not from DOA, detailing monthly revenue beginning in October of last year. The total revenue from renewals and initial applications amounted to \$74,042. There has been no change to the board’s allotment, which began at \$35,350 and currently reflects an available balance of \$12,490. She emphasized that these		R. Taitingfong	1217	Noted.

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		figures are only estimates due to the absence of official data from the DOA, and that the Treasurer's Report primarily reflects revenue collected from dues and payments during the renewal period and from initial applications.			
V	Administrator's Report	<p>B. Sablan reminded all members of the upcoming deadline to submit the Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest form to the Guam Election Commission, which is due on April 22, 2025. Members were informed that they could either email the completed form for submission on their behalf or deliver it directly to the Election Commission in person.</p> <p>Dr. Balajadia reiterated that the Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest form must be submitted annually, and that the form had already been emailed to each member. Those who had not yet submitted the form were encouraged to do so promptly.</p>	B. Sablan	1218	Noted
VI	GBAHE Complaints	A. GBAHE-CO-22-03 MFT Received 02/21/22. No report.	Dr. Balajadia	1219	Ongoing
		B. GBAHE-CO-23-02 Veterinarian Received 12/28/23 Sent to off-island consultant per Dr. Balajadia.	Dr. Balajadia		Ongoing
		C. GBAHE-CO-23-03 Veterinarian Received 12/28/23 Sent to off-island consultant per Dr. Balajadia.	Dr. Balajadia		Ongoing
		D. GBAHE-CO-24-03 SLP Received 08/06/24 Assigned to N. Cepeda	N. Cepeda		Ongoing
		E. GBAHE-CO-25-01 LPC Received 03/17/25 Assigned to Dr. Balajadia.	Dr. Balajadia		Ongoing
		F. GBAHE-CO-25-02 CP Received 03/26/25 Assigned to Dr. Harper.	Dr. Harper		Ongoing
		G. GBAHE-CO-25-03 Acupuncture Received 03/28/25 Assigned to Dr. Balajadia.	Dr. Balajadia		Ongoing
		H. GBAHE-CO-25-04 CP Received 03/31/25 Assigned to Dr. Harper.	Dr. Harper		Ongoing
		I. GBAHE-CO-25-05 LMHC, LPC Received 03/31/25 Assigned to R. Taitingfong.	R. Taitingfong		Ongoing
		<p>J. GBAHE-CO-25-06 LPC Received 04/02/25 Assigned to Dr. Balajadia.</p> <p>During the meeting, the Chair, Dr. Balajadia, initiated a discussion regarding ongoing legal matters, noting that some issues carry legal ramifications. It was explained that the office, through B. Tenorio, has been in contact with the Attorney General's office in an effort to secure a permanent legal counsel for the board. The goal is to have a consistent point of contact, as there has been a rotation of various Deputy Attorney Generals assisting the board. Dr. Balajadia expressed hope that this matter would soon be resolved. When the floor was opened for questions regarding complaints, D. Miller inquired about the basis of a new complaint, stating that she had not received any related documents. It was</p>	Dr. Balajadia		Noted, Legal Council is in Process of Procurement

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	<p>clarified that because the complaint had not yet been assigned to an investigator, no details could be shared. Even the individual assigned to the case had not been briefed on its contents, and as a result, no specific information could be disclosed to the board at this time.</p> <p>D. Miller questioned when the board would be allowed to review complaints to better understand the matters at hand, to which it was clarified that complaints are typically shared with the board only after the investigation has been completed. D. Miller then raised a concern about whether the board could address certain matters internally using its own rules and regulations, particularly when a complaint appears to involve a straightforward violation, rather than always relying on the Attorney General's office. It was explained that because the current complaints were new and had not yet been reviewed or assigned for investigation, no determinations could be made regarding their complexity or content. Additional clarification was given that the nature and subject of the complaints remain unknown until the investigator examines the materials and conducts interviews with the complainants. D. Miller referenced concerns raised during her confirmation hearing, where it was suggested that the board may rely too heavily on the Attorney General's office for matters that could be managed internally. The board agreed in principle with the idea that simpler issues should be resolved at the board level to avoid delays, but reiterated that no assumptions could be made at this stage, as none of the new complaints had been formally reviewed. There was shared concern about the lack of transparency, with the point made that board members should ideally be made aware of incoming complaints early on to prepare for future deliberations.</p> <p>D. Miller expressed concern that the board is expected to act on matters without knowing the content or context of the complaints, emphasizing that transparency is crucial since the board is collectively responsible for addressing such issues. She reiterated a point made during her confirmation hearing, where it was suggested that some complaints, such as one involving the use of the title "doctor," could potentially be handled internally at the board level without needing to go through the Attorney General's office. It was confirmed that this specific item was indeed on the agenda for discussion, but it was also noted that complaints currently being received often arrive without clear indications of their nature, and in some cases, board members had not yet reviewed the documents. A broader concern was raised about whether discussing complaints prematurely could compromise the board's impartiality. It was acknowledged that, historically, the board was informed of all complaints during executive sessions, and there was general agreement that board members should be kept aware of such matters, even if details are withheld from regular sessions. It was also clarified that procedural changes had been implemented based on legal advice, which now prohibit attaching names to complaints; instead, complaints are identified by assigned case numbers.</p> <p>It was explained that complaints typically do not reach the full board unless they are formally assigned and investigated, a process that was more structured and consistent when the board had stable legal counsel. Reflecting on past practices under former legal counsel R. Shnider, it was shared</p>			

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		<p>that assigned board members conducted investigations and then brought findings to the group only when a recommendation for disciplinary action or other formal measures was necessary. In one example from several years prior, a board member investigated a complaint alongside the chair and met directly with the subject of the complaint; the matter was not brought before the full board because it lacked sufficient evidence to warrant any disciplinary action. This approach kept the board from reviewing cases that did not merit further action. Dr. Balajadia emphasized that this past structure helped streamline the process and avoid unnecessary escalation of simple cases. Additionally, it was reiterated that legal guidance now prohibits the use of names in complaint documentation, requiring complaints to be identified by case numbers instead, marking a procedural shift intended to maintain confidentiality and legal compliance.</p> <p>In response to the board's concerns, Dr. Balajadia clarified that previous efforts to engage with the Attorney General's office through standard communication channels have often gone unanswered, prompting the need for more direct, personal outreach to establish consistent legal support. It was suggested that if some complaints are determined to be minor, the board could resolve them internally through discussion rather than relying entirely on the Attorney General's office, which can delay resolution. Additionally, it was noted that all current complaints are new and have not yet been reviewed in detail. The board was assured that if the newly assigned investigators are given adequate time to examine the complaint forms and complete internal procedures, more generalized information about the cases can be provided at the next board meeting, as requested by board members.</p> <p>B. Sablan informed the board that the Allied Health Board currently does not have legal counsel but that efforts are underway to secure representation. She is actively working through the procurement process to obtain legal services, similar to those previously provided by Attorneys McDonald, Concepcion, and Visowski. While she could not disclose specific details due to the ongoing nature of the process, she assured the board that she is also pursuing a memorandum of understanding with the Attorney General's office to secure both legal counsel and investigators. She expects to provide an update by the May board meeting. Additionally, a formal request for legal counsel has been submitted to the Attorney General on behalf of Director Arriola, as both the Allied Health and Medical Boards currently lack legal representation from the Office of the Attorney General. B. Sablan reiterated that once the newly assigned investigators have had time to review the complaints, the board will be better able to determine whether issues can be resolved internally or require external legal involvement.</p>			
VII	Old Business	<p>A. Initial/New Applications</p> <p>1. Roa, Jessie – PT (Taitingfong) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i></p> <p>B. Renewal Applications</p> <p>1. Kallingal, George – CP (Balajadia) D. Balajadia reported on the renewal application for Dr. George Kallingal, Clinical Psychologist, stating that the application remains incomplete and does not meet the</p>	<p>GBAHE</p> <p>GBAHE</p>	<p>1229</p>	<p>Unanimously Approved</p> <p>Tabled</p>

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		<p>requirements outlined in the rules. Due to missing documents, the application should not have been placed on the agenda. The application has been pending since around November or December of the previous year, and despite attempts to follow up, the necessary information has not been submitted.</p> <p>Dr. Kallingal currently holds a temporary license, which by law is valid for 60 days. Given the timeline, his temporary license has now expired, and without the required documents, the license cannot be renewed. The board clarified that this would now necessitate a new application process.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed about applicants not following the prescribed process, despite the form being straightforward. It was confirmed that the administrative staff has been communicating with Dr. Kallingal in a timely manner. The board emphasized the importance of adhering to protocols and acknowledged that failure to submit the required documentation means the license cannot be renewed. The item was tabled until the complete information is submitted.</p>			
VIII	New Business	A. Initial/New Applications	GBAHE	1239	
		1. Piescik, Akemy – PT (Taitingfong) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		2. Klawunder, Renee – OT (Taitingfong) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		3. Gardner, Lindsay – OT (Taitingfong) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		4. Wyche, Nicole – SLP (Triolo) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		5. Sevilla, Jaya – CD/Nutritionist (San Nicolas) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		6. Isaac, Lauren – SLP (Triolo) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		7. Bradley, Jordan – OT (Taitingfong) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		8. Lujan-Nucum, Jonathon – MFT Intern (Cepeda) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		9. Reyes, Casiana – LPC Intern (Cepeda) <i>Motion to Approve: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		B. Renewal Applications			
		1. Perez, Lilli – LPC (Balajadia) <i>Motion to Approve: C. San Nicolas; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Unanimously Approved
		2. Larkin, June – Chiropractor (Miller)			Unanimously

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	<i>Motion to Approve: C. San Nicolas; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i>			Approved
	C. Temporary License Issued Dr. Balajadia mentioned temporary licenses were issued by the chair due to timing constraints prior to a full board meeting. As all applicants have since submitted new applications, the temporary licenses will be suspended.			Noted
	1. Piescik, Akemy – PT (Taitingfong) Temporary license suspended in lieu of new applications.			Noted
	2. Roa, Jessie – PT (Taitingfong) Temporary license suspended in lieu of new applications.			Noted
	3. Gardner, Lindsay – OT (Taitingfong) Temporary license suspended in lieu of new application.			Noted
	D. Use of the title “Doctor” Dr. Miller raised concerns about the misuse of the title "Doctor," specifically referencing a recent instance where an acupuncturist used the title on Instagram despite not holding a doctoral degree. Dr. Chong confirmed that the individual in question did not have a Doctor of Oriental Medicine degree but rather a master's degree. Dr. Miller noted this is a recurring issue, especially among practitioners from countries where the title “Doctor” is used more loosely, even at non-doctorate levels. Dr. Miller recommended the board revisit this topic to clarify which professions are authorized to use the title "Doctor" and the educational level required—emphasizing that a master's degree does not qualify. He noted that Guam's laws and regulations are clear: the title “Doctor” must be based on an earned doctorate degree from an accredited institution, and honorary or conferred titles from ceremonies or international programs do not meet this standard. Dr. Miller advised that the board consider reviewing existing cases, updating their guidance, and issuing letters or cease and desist orders if necessary to address any misuse of the title.			Credentials will be Reviewed by the Board to Avoid Licensees Using the Title of “Doctor” Equivocally
	V. Harper agreed with the need to address the misuse of the title "Doctor" and emphasized that each discipline should monitor individuals within their scope to ensure they are both licensed and properly qualified to use the title. If individuals are found to be misrepresenting themselves, particularly by using the title without the appropriate credentials or licensure, a cease and desist letter should be issued. V. Harper specifically stated that the acupuncturist in question should receive such a letter, considering it a straightforward matter. Dr. Miller supported this course of action and noted that the board has the authority to issue cease and desist orders without involving the Attorney General's office, referencing a similar situation involving a chiropractor. Both members agreed that for clear violations of this nature, board action can be taken directly without requiring legal input.			
	Dr. Chong contributed to the discussion by clarifying that Hiroshi Ishii-Adajar holds a master's degree in acupuncture and oriental medicine, not a doctoral degree. He noted that it is common for some acupuncturists with only a master's degree to believe they are entitled to use the title "Doctor," particularly when patients address them as such. However, he emphasized that this is a			

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	<p>misunderstanding, as holding a master's degree does not legally justify the use of the title. Dr. Chong cited the Allied Health Practitioner Act, which clearly states that only individuals who have earned a doctoral or Ph.D. degree from an accredited institution in the United States are permitted to use the title "Doctor." He underscored that because Hiroshi was educated in the United States and not a foreign-trained practitioner, he should be fully aware of Guam's licensing requirements. Dr. Chong recommended that the board issue a letter informing Hiroshi to cease using the title "Doctor," as his credentials do not meet the legal standard outlined in the board's rules and regulations.</p> <p>Dr. Miller informed the board that the acupuncturist in question had submitted a message in the meeting chat, identifying himself as the individual being discussed and stating that he holds a Doctorate of Traditional Chinese Medicine from Five Branches University in San Jose. Dr. Miller acknowledged that, if accurate, this qualification would justify his use of the title "Doctor," and noted that the board had not been aware of this credential prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The discussion then shifted to the importance of clarity when using the title "Doctor." Dr. Miller explained that under Guam law, individuals must specify their field of expertise when using the title, especially in professional settings such as letterheads or advertisements. For example, he noted that his official materials must read "Dr. Gregory Miller, Chiropractor" to avoid confusion with other types of physicians, such as medical doctors or osteopaths. He emphasized that this level of specificity is necessary to prevent misrepresentation and to ensure that the title aligns directly with the individual's licensed scope of practice.</p> <p>V. Harper emphasized that the individual in question must ensure all relevant documentation and communications are properly submitted to the board for verification as part of the licensure process. Following this, the acupuncturist, Hiroshi Ishii-Adajar, requested and was granted permission to speak in order to clarify the situation.</p> <p>H. Ishii-Adajar identified himself as the acupuncturist referenced earlier and confirmed that he holds a dual degree from Five Branches University in San Jose, California: a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine and a Master of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He explained that both degrees were included in his official transcript submitted with his licensure application to the Guam Board of Allied Health Examiners. He acknowledged that the notation of the dual degree may have been overlooked, as it is a relatively new program.</p> <p>To address the concern raised, H. Ishii-Adajar stated that, after being made aware of the complaint, he submitted copies of both diplomas to K. Lee and the board's team. He expressed a willingness to provide any additional documentation needed and affirmed his understanding of the importance of using the title "Doctor" appropriately and only when duly authorized by licensure standards.</p> <p>It was confirmed during the meeting that H. Ishii-Adajar had submitted his official transcripts and diplomas, and the next step is for the board to verify the documentation. Dr. Chong indicated that he</p>			

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	<p>had not previously seen a record of the doctoral degree in acupuncture and oriental medicine during his initial review of the application. However, it was acknowledged that additional materials may have been submitted later, and the board agreed to revisit the file for verification.</p> <p>Dr. Balajadia instructed Dr. Chong to review H. Ishii-Adajar's file thoroughly to determine if the supporting documentation confirms the doctoral degree. Dr. Miller expressed satisfaction with the explanation and supported moving forward with the review. Dr. Chong confirmed he would re-examine the application, and if the doctorate is clearly documented and aligned with board regulations, then the use of the title "Doctor" would be deemed appropriate. The board thanked Dr. Chong for his follow-up and agreed to proceed pending his review.</p> <p>E. Request to Appear and Address the Board</p> <p>1. Hirsch, K'tanaw – Review of Veterinary Practice Requirement: Article 19 §121902 – three-year practice requirement.</p> <p>Dr. Harper clarified that three years of experience, did not appear in the law itself but rather on the application form under the general requirements section for veterinary medicine. K. Hirsch's question raised is whether internships would count toward this three-year requirement. Dr. Harper emphasized that internships, externships, or any pre-licensure experience would not fulfill this condition. The interpretation shared was that the three years of experience must begin only after obtaining a veterinary license, during which the individual is actively practicing. The reference to the requirement was found on the requirements page on the application, which specifies that an applicant must have practiced veterinary medicine for three years prior to filing the application.</p> <p>K. Hirsch addressed the board regarding the inclusion of the three-year experience requirement on the veterinary medicine application, which, according to her independent research, does not appear in the statute and seems to have been added administratively. She requested that this requirement be removed from the application, as its presence significantly affects the ability of veterinarians—particularly local students graduating from veterinary programs—to return to Guam and begin practicing after obtaining licensure. The current wording on the application effectively discourages newly licensed local professionals from coming back to the island to pursue their careers, as it implies they must first gain years of experience elsewhere.</p> <p>Her discussion centered on the request to remove the three-year experience requirement from the application, as it is not present in the statute and appears to be an administrative addition. It was pointed out that if the requirement were not removed, further clarification would be needed, especially given that recent graduates, particularly those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, might not have had the opportunity to accumulate the required experience.</p> <p>Dr. Harper emphasized that the issue at hand was not related to the challenges faced by COVID-era graduates or the NAVLI exam, but rather the fact that the three-year requirement was not part of the statute or regulations. Dr. Harper agreed that the core issue is whether or not the three-year requirement</p>			<p>GBAHE Unanimously Removed Article 19 §121902 Three-Year Practice Requirement from the Application</p>

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		<p>should be enforced, with the general consensus that licensure should be the primary criterion for practitioners wishing to return to the island.</p> <p>Dr. Balajadia acknowledged the concern, with the agreement that if the requirement is not specified in the statute or the rules and regulations, it should be removed. N. Cepeda emphasized that the board's intention is not to create unnecessary obstacles for applicants, and that individuals who are licensed should be permitted to practice without the imposition of unsubstantiated requirements. The board confirmed its commitment to addressing the issue.</p> <p>B. Sablan confirmed her review of the statute revealed no mention of the three-year experience requirement. Therefore, if the board is in agreement, the application will be amended immediately.</p> <p><i>Motion to Remove Article 19 121902 Three-Year Practice Requirement from the Application: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Harper.</i></p>			
IX	Next Board Meeting	Announcements – Next Meeting – May 2, 2025, at 12:00 p.m.	GBAHE	1230	Set Date
X	Adjournment	<i>Motion to Adjourn: N. Cepeda; 2nd: Dr. Triolo.</i>	GBAHE	1303	Adjourned

Minutes Drafted by: FLAME TREE Freedom Center, Inc.

Date Submitted:

Submitted by the GBAHE Secretary:

Date:

Approved by the GBAHE with or without changes:

Date:

Certified by or Attested by the Chairperson:

Manix Chalepadia

Date: 05/06/2025