

## **Alaska Board of Pharmacy – Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** May 21, 2026

**Start Time:** 9:06 AM

**Location:** Virtual (Zoom)

**Quorum:** Met

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### **1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

- Chair: Ashley Schaber called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM.
- Roll Call: Conducted by Michael Bowles (Executive Administrator).
- Quorum: Confirmed with four board members present.

### **2. New Board Member Introduction**

- Lillian Okpaleke introduced as a new board member, Director of Pharmacy for Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, residing in Bethel, Alaska.

### **3. Ethics Disclosures**

- Michael Bowles disclosed election as district chairman in a local political party and intent to run for House District 25, necessitating resignation from the board. Participation in political activities occurs outside business hours and was cleared by supervisors.
- Announcement: Michael Bowles will resign next week due to candidacy requirements for state office.
- Chair Schaber noted that concerns had been raised with her and she had discussed the issues with division leadership.
- Board and staff expressed appreciation for Michael Bowles's service.

### **4. Consent Agenda**

- Consent agenda items were reviewed and approved by unanimous consent.
- No objections were raised.

### **5. Division Investigations Update**

- Report by Billy Homestead (Senior Investigator):
  - Reporting period: Jan 28 – May 11, 2026.
  - 50 cases opened, 36 closed.
- Case Reviews:

- Board members confirmed review of case materials.
- Motions and roll call votes conducted for each case:
  - 2026-000365: License surrender accepted.
    - Ashley Schaber – yes
    - Julie McDonald – yes
    - Sylvain Nouvion – yes
    - Lillian Okpaleke -- yes
  - 2025-000982: Consent agreement accepted.
    - Ashley Schaber – yes
    - Julie McDonald – yes
    - Sylvain Nouvion – yes
    - Lillian Okpaleke -- yes
  - 2026-000098: Consent agreement accepted.
    - Ashley Schaber – yes
    - Julie McDonald – yes
    - Sylvain Nouvion – yes
    - Lillian Okpaleke -- yes
- Discussion: Clarification on case numbers and process for handling discrepancies.

## 6. Investigations Process Discussion

- Summary Suspension Process: Explained by Billy Homestead.
  - Immediate public safety concerns can trigger summary suspension.
  - Legal and investigative steps required before action.
- Mandatory Reporting: Licensees and investigators have obligations to report criminal or regulatory violations.
- Board Involvement: Board is not involved in every intake but is engaged when public safety is at risk.
- Timeliness: Board and staff discussed the balance between due process and public safety, with examples of quick action in serious cases.

## 7. Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) Update

- Lisa Sherrell (PDMP Manager):
  - Quarterly reports may shift to every six months.
  - New non-fatal overdose module launched in April; metrics pending.
  - Discussion of pharmacist-in-charge (PIC) PDMP registration requirements and discrepancies between facility and pharmacist reporting.
  - Board tasked Lisa Sherrell with updating communication templates to clarify requirements.
  - Third-party vendor reporting and zero-reporting practices discussed; further information to be gathered for next meeting.
  - Board considered requiring all PICs to register with PDMP but noted statutory changes would be needed.

## 8. Division Administration Operations Update

- Melissa Dumas (Operations Manager):
  - FY26 third quarter budget report presented.
  - Revenue and expenditures detailed; current deficit noted, but renewal revenue expected to improve balance.
  - Fee change project discussed, with proposed increases to address deficit.
  - Board discussed balancing fee increases across license types and compared to other states.
  - Motion passed to submit two fee change options to the Chief of Staff for consideration.

## 9. Division Licensing Update

- Michael Bowles:
  - Renewal season is progressing smoothly, with 3,200 out of 7,800 licenses renewed.
  - Online renewals praised for efficiency.
  - Manual processing required for certain applications (e.g., new pharmacy technicians, disciplinary disclosures).

## 10. Public Comment Period

- Comments received from:
  - Liv Swonger: Concern about staff statements potentially causing confusion about state law.
  - Carrie Urena: Questioned whether administrative staff may publicly advocate for/against legislation affecting the profession.
- Chair acknowledged comments for board consideration.

## 11. Industry Updates

- Brandy Seignemartin (Alaska Pharmacy Association):
  - House Bill 195 passed, expanding pharmacist scope of practice.
  - Rural Health Transformation Program proposal submitted.
  - PBM reform and national trends discussed.
  - Upcoming events and committee restructuring announced.

## 12. Legislative Updates

- House Bill 195 (pharmacist scope of practice) and House Bill 239 (Controlled Substance Advisory Committee) passed legislature, awaiting governor's signature.
- HB 270 (Opioid Overdose Drug Prescription) language was added to HB 195.
- Board agreed to draft letters of support for both bills to the governor.
- Senate Bill 233 (Controlled Substance Advisory Committee) language included in HB239.

## 13. Regulations and Committees

- Administrative Order 360: Board's regulation changes approved and forwarded to Department of Law.
- Workgroup meetings to continue regulation review and address HB195-related changes.
- Committee assignments reviewed and updated.
- Delegation of authority to Executive Administrator for case review to be reconsidered after transition.

## 14. Annual Board Report

- Draft reviewed and updated with legislative, regulatory, licensing, and communication accomplishments.

- Tasks assigned for further edits and final approval via onboard.

#### 15. Controlled Substance Advisory Committee (CSAC) Update

- Sara Rasmussen:
  - CSAC recommended scheduling kratom; discussion ongoing about gabapentin.
  - Board pharmacist and PDMP manager to attend next CSAC meeting.

#### 16. DEA Update

- Jerry Short (DEA):
  - Trends in street drugs, DEA 106 reporting, and abandoned medications discussed.
  - Recommendation that EMS services each obtain their own DEA registration to provide more clarity when several services share a medical director.
  - Board to request annual DEA briefing on drug trends.
  - Guidance provided on proper disposal of abandoned medications.

#### 17. Risk-Based Facility Inspection Model

- Board discussed feasibility and current authority for risk-based inspections; determined current processes are sufficient.

#### 18. Law Questionnaire for Reciprocity Applicants

- Board agreed to update problematic questions and lower passing threshold to 90%.
- \*\*Lillian Okpaleke assigned to review and revise questions 3 and 6.

#### 19. Task List Review

- Outstanding and new tasks reviewed and assigned, including follow-ups on legislative letters, committee meetings, outreach to DOH on EMS DEA registration, newsletter content, and annual report completion.

#### 20. Next Meetings

- Next quarterly meeting: August 20 (noted as Lillian Okpaleke's birthday).
- November meeting: November 19.
- Workgroup meetings to be scheduled as needed.

#### 21. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 3:09 PM by unanimous consent.