

GEORGIA BOARD OF DENTISTRY
Sleep Apnea Committee Conference Call
2 Peachtree St., N.W., 6th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303
May 27, 2022
2:00 p.m.

The following Committee members were present:

Dr. Michael Knight, Chair
Ms. Misty Mattingly
Dr. Brent Stiehl

Staff present:

Eric Lacefield, Executive Director
Kirsten Daughdril, Sen Asst Attorney General
Max Changus, Assistant Attorney General
Brandi Howell, Business Support Analyst I

Visitors:

Thomas Beusse, GDA
Dr. Suzanne Mericle

Open Session

Dr. Knight established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

Introduction of Visitors

Dr. Knight welcomed the visitors.

Dr. Stiehl made a motion and Ms. Mattingly seconded and the Committee voted to enter into **Executive Session** for the purpose of receiving legal advice as authorized under O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1(e)(2)(c), 50-14-2(1). Voting in favor of the motion were those present who included Dr. Michael Knight, Ms. Misty Mattingly, and Dr. Brent Stiehl.

Executive Session

Attorney General's Report – Mr. Max Changus

The Board received legal advice regarding ordering of sleep apnea studies by dentists.

No votes were taken in Executive Session. Dr. Knight declared the meeting back in Open Session.

Open Session

Sleep Apnea Discussion

Dr. Stiehl stated that the Board's previous position was that sleep apnea did not fall within the scope of practice of dentistry and dentists could not administer home sleep test. He stated that a lot has happened since that time concerning sleep apnea. He explained that most every state allows the dentist to prescribe a home sleep test with the understanding the physician does the diagnosing and interpretation. Dr. Stiehl continued by stating that the Board is looking to change the policy to state that dentists are not prohibited from ordering a home sleep study. He stated that dentists screen many patients and see the patient's airway. He further stated that dentists see multiple patients every day that have signs of sleep issues. Dr. Stiehl stated that allowing a dentist to order a home sleep test would allow for the better screening of patients and would serve more people. He explained that if the dentist makes the appliance, he/she can ensure the appliance has the most optimal position for the airway. Dr. Stiehl stated that for these reasons,

that is why the Board feels the dentist should be able to screen the patient and order a home sleep study. He continued by stating that the dentist would not be diagnosing as the diagnosis of sleep apnea is solely in the purview of the physician. Dr. Stiehl stated that the Board was not trying to take anything away from scope of medicine.

Ms. Mattingly commented that the Board feels this will allow interdisciplinary relationships as well. Ms. Mattingly read the following proposed change to the Board's current policy:

The Georgia Board of Dentistry met on April 1st, 2022, and addressed the ability of dentists to order a sleep study.

The Board's opinion has changed since 2016 and recommends the adoption of the following to be updated in the Georgia Board of Dentistry Policy Manual:

- *Georgia dentists are not prohibited from ordering sleep apnea tests. Diagnosis of sleep apnea is solely in the purview of the patient's physician and the practice of medicine.*
- *Dentists are allowed to dispense portable monitors for patients at risk for sleep apnea.*
- *Dentists are allowed to order portable monitors for patients identified by the dentist as being at risk for sleep apnea.*
- *Dentists are allowed to use a portable monitor to help determine the optimal effective position of a patient's oral appliance.*
- *Dentists are allowed to order a portable monitor to verify the effectiveness of an oral appliance.*

Ms. Mattingly stated that she would be happy to hear the public's opinion regarding this matter. Dr. Knight inquired if there was any input from the members of the public concerning the statement read by Ms. Mattingly. Mr. Beusse responded by stating that at this time he does not have any input without having a copy of what was read. He inquired if the policy change had to be approved by the Board. Dr. Knight responded affirmatively. Dr. Knight stated that the policy change would be presented to the Board at its June meeting.

Dr. Stiehl asked Mr. Beusse if GDA had received any input from dentists regarding this matter. Mr. Beusse responded that, to his knowledge, there was not, but prior to his time with GDA he did hear about it. He requested that a copy of the policy change be emailed to him and then he would obtain the GDA's official opinion on it. Ms. Mattingly commented that when researching the information for the policy, the Committee reviewed HSAT information. She added that this would be a great resource for GDA.

Dr. Knight asked if there were any further comments. There were none. He stated that in the last 30 years since he has practiced, the health of patients as a whole have more health concerns now than in previous years. He further stated that it may be that there is more technology or information available now. Dr. Knight continued by stating that he sees many patients that are on medications and have more health concerns now. He stated that he thinks being able to sleep better and have overall better health makes a big difference. Dr. Knight stated that in looking at the current policy, it is more of a concern now than years ago. He explained that the Board was not trying to mix dentistry and medicine; it was just trying to improve care for patients. Ms. Mattingly agreed with Dr. Knight and stated that things will change more in the years to come. She stated that the Board needs to look at how the profession is changing and stay in tune with how to treat the public and patients.

Dr. Stiehl commented that one of the reasons this matter was important is that 60% of the people that are prescribed a CPAP are not able to wear it. He stated that the Board was not trying to change that; however, if the patient needs to wear an oral appliance, that is a screening tool and would help many

people if dentists were permitted to order the sleep test. He further stated that this was a subject dear to his heart as he wears a CPAP himself. He added that it makes a huge difference in his life. He stated that this was his input from a personal view.

Dr. Stiehl made a motion to refer the policy change to the full Board for consideration. Ms. Mattingly seconded, and the Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Brandi Howell, Business Support Analyst I

Minutes edited by Eric R. Lacefield, Executive Director