

STATE BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY of OHIO
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

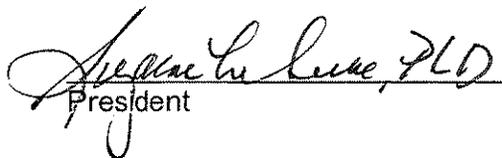
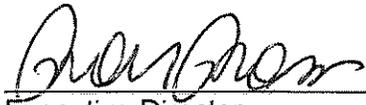
SECTION 9: PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

POLICY 9.1: INQUIRIES AND RELEASE OF INFORMATION

PRIOR DATE EFFECTIVE: JUNE 9, 2003

AMENDED AND EFFECTIVE: APRIL 29, 2013

REVIEWED AND APPROVED

 President	<u>7/15/13</u> Date	 Executive Director	<u>5/9/13</u> Date
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POLICY STATEMENTS AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

- 1) Board members and office staff contacted directly by members of the public, including media, for information or opinions relative to Board business shall refer the matter to the Executive Director, who shall correspond with the President as needed to develop a strategy to provide appropriate, timely, and accurate statements. In the Executive Director's absence, the President shall receive the referral, and office staff will be instructed as to how to contact the Executive Director when away from the office.

Matters of "Board business" include, as examples, responses to inquiries regarding the status of an investigation, formal actions taken by the Board, opinions/positions relative to public safety issues, information relative to new appointments, the status of legislation or rule-making, and other broad issues relative to the Board's responsibilities. Depending on the circumstances, the matter may be referred back to the Member or the staff person receiving the inquiry.

- 2) The Executive Director has the authority to respond to media inquiries made directly to the Board office, shall keep a written record of media contacts, and shall notify the President of each media inquiry and the response provided. No staff person shall provide comment to the media relative to Board business without express permission of the Executive Director. Routine requests for general information, as detailed in employee position descriptions, may be handled by the staff member receiving the call or letter.
- 3) Legal advice is not and should not be given by Board members or staff in discussions with licensees or the public. However, professional and procedural advice should be available from the Board. When Board members, the Executive director, or staff members respond to questions from callers, the callers should be advised: 1) a summary of the conversation will be on file and may become public record, 2) information provided does not constitute legal advice, and 3) if discussion focuses on a need for legal advice, the Board members advises the licensee to contact his/her own attorney or OPA.

- 4) Telephone inquiries regarding disciplinary action on a specific licensee will be addressed by providing information from the licensee's section in the Ohio eLicensing database or web site only. In verifying license status to a caller or correspondent, staff are to answer only the question(s) asked and to respond "yes" if the question is asked whether the licensee is "in good standing" if there is not discipline on the license. If further information is requested, a copy of the Board's Order or Consent Agreement shall be provided at no charge. Full public records are provided at a cost of 5 cents per page. All releases of public records are logged pursuant to Office policies.
- 5) The Board does not recommend or make referrals to practitioners in any particular area, either geographical or related to professional specialization. Callers seeking referrals may be referred to the OPA referral program, OSPA, or to the third party payor, if appropriate. Staff members may inform callers that the most recent license renewal form is a public record with information about self-identified competencies.
- 6) Ohio Department of Mental Health rules include "Psychology Assistant" for Medicaid reimbursement, and agencies need some proof that an employee is registered with the Board as a "Psychology Assistant". The agency may compose whatever type of verification letter needed and send it to the Board office providing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The Program Administrator 1 (PA1; "Executive Assistant") or designee will sign the verification form if it is accurate and return the letter to the sender.
- 7) The Board cannot control employment contracts including those with "non-compete" agreements, insofar as the issues go beyond what is covered in General Rules of Professional Conduct.
- 8) In addition to a majority vote of the Board, the President or the Executive Director may independently approve information to be added to the Board's web site.
- 9) Following each Board meeting at which formal action is taken by the Board, the Executive Director or designated investigator will advise the Program Administrator 1 in writing regarding what discipline notation is to be made on the license cards of licensees subject to disciplinary actions and on the Board's web site. This may be accomplished through the completion, by the Executive Director, of the post-meeting regulatory compliance/enforcement action summary, which is mailed to target parties by the Executive Assistant. The Executive Director shall update the disciplinary data summary on the Board web site no later than 10 days following each formal action.