



The Delaware Health Care Commission (DHCC) Meeting

September 5, 2024

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Meeting Attendance and Minutes

Commission Members Present In-Person: Dr. Nancy Fan (St. Francis), Cabinet Secretary Rick Geisenberger, Stephanie Traynor (DSCYF), Nick Moriello (Highmark Delaware), and Trinidad Navarro (DOI)

Commission Members Attending virtually: Theodore Becker, Dr. Jan Lee (DHIN), Cabinet Secretary Josette Manning (DHSS), and Mike Quaranta

Commission Members Absent: None

Meeting Facilitator: Dr. Nancy Fan, Chair

Health Care Commission Staff: Elisabeth Massa, (Executive Director), Latoya Wright (Manager of Statistics and Research), Sue Walters (Public Health Treatment Program Administrator), and Sheila Saylor (Admin)

Anchor Location: The Chapel, Herman M. Holloway Sr. Health and Social Services Campus
1901 N. DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE 19720

CALL TO ORDER

After confirming a quorum, Dr. Fan called the meeting to order at approximately 9:07 a.m. Public attendees were reminded to identify themselves by placing their name and affiliation in the chat box and those attending in person to sign the sign-in sheet in the Chapel.

BOARD BUSINESS

ACTION ITEM: Approve July 11, 2024, Meeting Minutes

The commissioners reviewed the July 11, 2024, meeting minutes. Dr. Fan asked if there were any comments. Hearing none, Dr. Jan Lee (DHIN), made a motion to approve the minutes and it

was seconded by Ted Becker. No objections were made. The commissioners approved the minutes which are available on the [DHCC Website](#).

ACTION ITEM: Strategic Retreat Update

Dr. Fan reviewed the details for the Strategic Retreat. The Retreat will be held on Friday, November 22, 2024, from 12 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. at the Hilton Wilmington/Christiana Hotel (100 Continental Drive, Newark, DE). The meeting facilitator will again be Dr. Devona Williams. The agenda is still being finalized, and lunch will be provided for the commissioners.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Delaware Institute for Dental Education and Research (DIDER)

Dr. Louis Rafetto, the chair of the Delaware Institute for Dental Education and Research (DIDER), presented the DIDER update.

Dr. Rafetto described the current DIDER Board of Directors and DIDER's historical background, including funding for the program. Dr. Rafetto reviewed statistics from the 2019 Health Care Workforce Study. DIDER has met its goal to obtain dental school admission for Delaware residents and to achieve a strong rate of return to practice in Delaware and should continue to be strongly supported.

Dr. Rafetto discussed the challenges that DIDER is facing, lack of state support and diminishing financial support for existing programs over the past decade. He explained that funding has remained flat for the past decade. Despite this, DIDER continues to look for ways to fulfill its mission.

Dr. Rafetto discussed the 2024 entering class for DIDER's partnering school, Temple University's Kornberg School of Dentistry. Kornberg received 3574 applications, with 27 from Delaware. Temple is under contractual commitment to accept 4 applicants from Delaware; however, 7 Delaware students were accepted. Dr. Rafetto mentioned the concern for the underrepresented minority (URM) students with non-competitive Dental Admission Test (DAT), scores and how DIDER developed an application and protocol for URM students to have access to a Dental Aptitude preparation course.

Dr. Rafetto gave an update on the 2023-24 Residency Program at ChristianaCare Health System (CCHS). There are 8 residents from 5 schools (Temple, Penn, Marquette, Maryland, and Pitt). There are 3 Delaware residents (2- New Castle, 1-Sussex), and the remaining 5 residents, 2 DIDER students, 1 California, 2 Maryland, 1 New Jersey, and 1 Pennsylvania. All 8 residents took the Delaware Board Exam and passed on their first attempt. All 8 residents decided to stay

in Delaware following graduation. Seven secured positions in dental practices and one remains as an intern in the Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery program at CCHS. GPR residency remains a powerful tool for recruiting dentists to Delaware.

Dr. Rafetto shared statistics on the incoming GPR Resident class. The incoming class consists of 8 residents from 3 schools (1 Pitt, 6 Temple, and 1 South Carolina) Noting that 5 students are from Delaware (4 New Castle, 1 Sussex), 2 are from Pennsylvania, 1 from South Carolina, and 4 are DIDER students.

Dr. Rafetto discussed the survey DIDER undertook of the Dental Residency graduates from 2022 where 56% did their residency in Delaware and 44% did their residency in other states. Of the students surveyed 100% see the value of post-graduation residency.

Dr. Rafetto spoke of CCHS's dwindling financial support. The annual program cost of \$6.5 million is split between CCHS, support from dentists in the community, and to a lesser extent, local foundations. The program operates at a loss of more than \$3M annually. CCHS pays the salary and benefits of residents and shares the residents through rotations at Westside and Delaware Tech clinics at no cost to those organizations. The CCHS dental clinic is a safety net for the community, offering patients care unavailable at other clinics.

Dental licensing and exam data for dentists and hygienists was shared by Dr. Rafetto for the years 2021 through 2023. It was noted that not everyone who passes the exam chooses to obtain a license. It was shared that in Delaware and nationwide there is difficulty in securing hygienists.

Dr. Rafetto presented examples of DIDER's student outreach efforts for high school, undergraduate, and dental school students. The loan repayment program is a valuable recruitment tool. It was noted that there is a challenge in identifying opportunities to reach high school students.

DIDER surveyed dentists and dental students to understand the deciding factors for selecting a place to work and also the makeup of the current dentist population. This was to learn how to recruit more dentists to Delaware. DIDER learned that 43.5% of dentists came from Delaware 56.5% from other states. About half went to dental school in Pennsylvania making recruitment efforts more challenging. More than 75% of students consider student debt to be very important, utmost important, or extremely important in deciding where to practice. Out of the survey, DIDER learned that >85% surveyed consider Loan Repayment as important or very important when deciding where they will practice. The ease of obtaining a license was the least important concern when considering where to practice. About 1/3 of current DIDER students were undecided at the time of the survey where they would practice.

Dr. Rafetto outlined that DIDER actively participated on Senator McBride's task force for:

- Underserved populations
- Recruitment and Retention
- Provider Types and scope of practice
- Dental insurance networks
- Licensure

In conclusion, Dr Rafetto said DIDER is performing its duties well given current financial restraints. We have an excellent partner in Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry. The CCHS residency provides important training and community service, in addition to being a strong attraction for dentists in Delaware. DIDER can improve its service with increased financial (and other) support from the state and other agencies.

Dr. Rafetto listed some goals of DIDER. The expansion of the DIDER mission to include support training for dentists to manage patients with disabilities. Support training opportunities for hygienists and dental assistants. Expansion of current GPR program or linked satellite program. Enhance recruitment efforts at the college (and high school) levels. Enhance recruitment of dentists, hygienists, and assistants. Consider outreach to foreign graduates of programs that award US dental degrees. Loan repayment and GPR have proven to be the most effective modalities. Tuition assistance is needed because most students graduate from dental school with debt loads approaching \$500,000.00. Existing funding only provides an advantage in gaining admission to Temple Dental School. Tuition assistance would not only expand the opportunity for Delaware residents to attend dental school, but it would also provide a closer link to the recipients. The DIDER presentation is available on the [DHCC Website](#).

Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER)

Dr. Kathleen Matt, the chair of the Delaware Institute for Medical Education and Research (DIMER), presented an update on DIMER.

Dr. Matt discussed the current DIMER board composition including its 5 new members, and legislation that was passed by the House and Senate in June 2024 that will modify the DIMER board and make a few other changes.

Dr. Matt shared data on admission to medical school through DIMER and the return to Delaware for practicing medicine. At Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC), admission in 2012 was 29% compared to 39% in 2019. At Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), admission in 2012 was 40% compared to 61% in 2019. The percentage of DIMER Students with residencies or practice in Delaware is 30%.

Dr. Matt presented information regarding the feasibility study by the Sussex Economic Development Action Committee for an Osteopathic Medical School in Sussex County. Dr. Matt provided a synopsis regarding the Medical School Resolution passed in 2024.

Dr. Matt shared DIMER's next steps and strategic planning for the next 5 years and the approach is to grow our own medical teams and recruit and retain them. This led to a discussion regarding re-training. Dr. Matt shared some are in a profession, have their college degree and doing something, but they see the need in health care. These individuals already have that professionalism so there may be opportunities there. Dr. Matt asked how we could design training programs. Dr. Fan commented that an area that has always been an opportunity is the international medical graduates. Stephanie Traynor asked about exploring opportunities for students in Sussex County and to have the resources, so students do not have to relocate by creating partnerships. Dr. Fan responded by saying we need to consider that an in-state medical school means in-state tuition rewards. That represents a huge financial advantage for Delaware students. If we started looking at other programs to partner with, the next ask we have is not just geographic, but it's also the need to help these students pay for medical school. Dr. Matt's concern was that we continue to maximize the impact of the programs we have in place currently such as DIMER and DIDER. The DIMER presentation is available on the [DHCC Website](#).

Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Outlook

Cabinet Secretary Rick Geisenberger presented the FY2026 Budget Outlook.

Secretary Geisenberger stated that the largest increase to the budget was healthcare-related, specifically state employee and retiree healthcare, not compensation.

Secretary Geisenberger discussed the Delaware Annual Budget Cycle which begins in July and ends June 30 with the budget adoption by the Governor. Secretary Geisenberger addressed that in FY25, Delaware will have a new Governor who may or may not propose a new budget. Secretary Geisenberger explained Delaware has had some very good years of revenue growth, but the forecast right now is for fairly slow revenue growth. Secretary Geisenberger added Delaware does not have very stable steady sources of income like a sales tax. Delaware relies on things that are more volatile such as personal income which depends upon capital gains, and corporate income, which depends on corporate profitability, not just in Delaware but nationally. It is the volatility of the revenues that have led historically to these budgets up and down that's the reason why we worked on budget stabilization and creating a budget stabilization fund and trying to smooth out budget growth.

Secretary Geisenberger mentioned the decline in the cigarette tax revenue which he attributed to consumption, and they have been asked to investigate the vaping tax to supplement the decrease.

Secretary Geisenberger gave the projection for FY25 and FY26 stating that despite projected low revenue growth, barring a major economic surprise, the State remains well positioned to sustainably fund door openers (personnel costs, salaries, step increases collective bargaining, health care for retirees, and employees) new programs may be difficult to finance.

Secretary Geisenberger spoke about sustainable levels of growth, inflation numbers, and the consumer price index and its relation to Delaware's budget growth and what the government will be looking at when drafting the budget. The FY 2026 Budget Outlook presentation is available on the [DHCC Website](#).

UPDATES

Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program (HCPLRP) Awards

An update on the HCPLRP awards is available on the [DHCC Website](#).

Primary Care Reform Collaborative (PCRC)

The PCRC update is available on the [DHCC Website](#)

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment

ADJOURN

Dr. Fan adjourned, the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

UPCOMING MEETING

The next DHCC meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. The anchor location for the meeting: The Chapel, Department of Health and Social Services Herman Holloway Campus (1901 N. DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE 19720)

**Public Meeting Attendees
September 5, 2024
Public Meeting Attendees (Virtual)**

Brian Olson	La Red Health Center
Bria Greenlee	
Brian Frazee	DHA
Cheryl Heiks	Delaware Health Care Facilities Assoc
Chris Fraser	Westside Family Healthcare
Chris Haas	DOI
Christina Bryan	Delaware Healthcare Association
Christina Miller	DOI
David Bentz	DHSS
Delaney McGonegal	MACHC
David Isom	DPH
Lou Rafetto	DIDER
Judy Butler	League of Women Voters
Kathy Collison	DSAMH
Kathy Matt	DIMER
Krishna Upadhya	DMMA
Lisa Gruss	Medical Society of Delaware
Lori Ann Rhodes	Medical Society of Delaware
Maggie Norris-Bent	Westside Family Healthcare
Megan Williams	DHA
Nick Conte	DPH
Nicole Freedman	
Pam Gardner	DHSA
Richa Shah	United Medical
Sherry Nykiel	DMMA
Tanisha Merced	DOI
Stephanie Hartos	DHR
Steven Constantino	DHSS
Susan Jennette	DOI
Wayne Smith	