

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 3, 2008

3:04 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair  
Representative Bob Roses, Vice Chair  
Representative Anna Fairclough  
Representative Wes Keller  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Sharon Cissna  
Representative Berta Gardner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

State Medical Board

Dr. John Cullen - Valdez  
Dr. William W. Resinger - Palmer  
Dr. Lawrence W. Stinson, Jr. - Anchorage  
Michael J. Tauriainen - Soldotna  
Dr. Jean Tsigonis - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

Cheryl A. Corrick - Fairbanks  
Dr. Peggy A. Downing - Palmer  
Holly M. Steiner - Wasilla

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Education and Early Development

Geraldine C. Benshoof - North Pole  
Philip E. Schneider - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Nursing

Denise Ekstrom - Anchorage  
Agnes M. Jack - Kotzebue

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Pharmacy

Kathe Boucha - Anchorage  
Robert Young - Sitka

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Richard Lum - Eagle River  
George Troxel - Palmer

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Examiners Optometry

Jill Matheson - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

DR. JOHN CULLEN, MD, Appointee  
to the State Medical Board  
Valdez, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Medical Board.

DR. WILLIAM RESINGER, MD, Appointee  
to the State Medical Board  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Medical Board.

DR. LAWRENCE STINSON, JR., MD, Appointee  
to the State Medical Board

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Medical Board.

DR. JEAN TSIGONIS, MD, Appointee

to the State Medical Board

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Medical Board.

CHERYL CORRICK, Appointee

to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

GERALDINE BENSHOOF, Appointee

to the Board of Education and Early Development

North Pole, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Education.

PHILLIP SCHNEIDER, Appointee

to the Board of Education and Early Development

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Education.

DENISE EKSTROM, Appointee

to the Board of Nursing

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Nursing.

AGNES JACK, Appointee

to the Board of Nursing

Kotzebue, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Nursing.

HOLLY STEINER, Appointee

to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

KATHE BOUCHA, Appointee

to the Board of Pharmacy  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Pharmacy.

ROBERT YOUNG, Appointee  
to the Board of Pharmacy  
Director, Professional Service Division  
Mount Edgecombe Hospital  
Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Pharmacy.

RICHARD LUM, Appointee  
to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
Eagle River, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

GEORGE TROXEL, Appointee  
to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission  
Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

TRACY OMEN, Executive Director  
Alaska Optometric Association  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Dr. Jill Matheson's, appointment to the Board of Examiners Optometry.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

**CHAIR PEGGY WILSON** called the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:04:09 PM](#). Representatives Wilson, Seaton, Roses, Keller, and Gardner were present at the call to order. Representatives Fairclough and Cissna arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[3:05:11 PM](#)

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)  
State Medical Board

[3:05:15 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the first order of business would be the confirmation hearings on the appointment of Dr. John Cullen, Dr. William W. Resinger, Dr. Lawrence W. Stinson, Jr., Michael Tauriainen, and Dr. Jean Tsigonis, to the State Medical Board.

[The motion for advancement to be combined with that of the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives; to follow.]

[3:06:38 PM](#)

DR. JOHN CULLEN, MD, Appointee, to the State Medical Board, introduced himself as a rural physician, a perspective that he will bring to the board.

[3:07:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER referred to his resume, and commented on his original presentation for medical groups or general public regarding extreme ski injuries. She asked if he had experience with that area of medicine, prior to his practice in Valdez.

DR. CULLEN said that his knowledge stems from being the physician sponsor, for the Valdez based extreme skiing championships, for seven years.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER referred to his presentation on adult manifestations of child abuse, and inquired whether he had observed this through his practice, or followed the topic out of personal interest.

DR. CULLEN responded that he has done research on the topic due to his personal interest.

[3:08:36 PM](#)

DR. WILLIAM RESINGER, MD, Appointee, to the State Medical Board, said that when the governor called, he did not hesitate to serve. Directing attention to his resume, he said that this appointment is consistent with his experience.

[3:09:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER pointed out that Dr. Resinger is a personal friend, and expressed his appreciation for his willingness to serve.

[3:10:10 PM](#)

DR. LAWRENCE STINSON, JR., MD, Appointee, to the State Medical Board, stated his interest, for serving on the board, is due to his focus on forwarding general health care in Alaska.

[3:11:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER noted his extensive work in the research field and asked if he is still actively involved in that area.

DR. STINSON explained his past opportunities to publish, and said that he is currently working on a paper. Finding the time is always a challenge, he added.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said that being appointed to the board, may adversely impact his ability to continue writing.

DR. STINSON responded that he anticipates the service will be an overall beneficial experience.

[3:12:36 PM](#)

DR. JEAN TSIGONIS, MD, introduced herself to the committee.

[3:13:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES reflected on Dr. Tsigonis' comments that she has previously provided on issues before the committee. He stressed the value of the information that every witness provides, in the committee's decision making process.

[3:15:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON reviewed the qualifications of Mike Tauriainen, and established that his appointment is to the layman's seat on the medical board.

#### Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be confirmation hearings on the appointment of Cheryl Corrick, Peggy Downing, and Holly Steiner to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

[3:16:25 PM](#)

CHERYL CORRICK, Appointee, to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives, said that she has attended over 600 births, in the interior of Alaska, and sees this appointment as a means to maintain her interest, as well as to serve the public.

[3:18:18 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked the committee to review Dr. Peggy Downing's and Holly Steiner's qualifications. She added that Ms. Steiner was called away to attend a birth.

[3:19:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to Dr. Downing's certification, and asked if her appointment is to a seat on the midwifery board specifically reserved for a medical doctor.

[3:20:40 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON said yes.

[3:21:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to forward the names of Dr. John Cullen, Dr. William Resinger, Dr. Lawrence Stinson, Jr., Michael Tauriainen, Dr. Jean Tsigonis, Cheryl Corrick, Peggy Downing, and Holly Steiner to the joint session of the House and Senate for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmations of Dr. John Cullen, Dr. William Resinger, Dr. Lawrence Stinson, Jr., Michael Tauriainen, Dr. Jean Tsigonis, Cheryl Corrick, Peggy Downing, and Holly Steiner were advanced from the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee.

[3:22:58 PM](#)

Board of Education and Early Development

[3:23:22 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearings on the appointment of Geraldine Benshoof and Philip Schneider to the Board of Education and Early Development.

[The motion for advancement to be combined with that of the Board of Pharmacy; to follow.]

[3:23:44 PM](#)

GERALDINE BENSHOOF, Appointee, to the Board of Education and Early Development, established her background in education and speech pathology.

[3:24:46 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER commented that her resume is "astounding," including her extensive public service on various boards and camps, as well as being an ordained deacon.

MS. BENSHOOF stated that she has been in the area for a number of years and the accomplishments have occurred over a length of time.

[3:25:28 PM](#)

PHILLIP SCHNEIDER, Appointee, to the Board of Education and Early Development, expressed his interest in educational policy. He has traveled and consulted in schools around the world and is interested in bringing that global perspective to the board.

CHAIR WILSON seeing no questions, thanked him for his willingness to serve.

Board of Nursing

[3:27:48 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be confirmation hearings on the appointment of Denise Elkstrom and Agnes Jack to the Board of Nursing.

[The motion for advancement to be combined with that of the Board of Pharmacy; to follow.]

[3:27:53 PM](#)

DENISE EKSTROM, Appointee, to the Board of Nursing, provided a statement outlining her service and interest in the nursing field.

[3:28:29 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked if she worked at the clinic in Delta Junction, Alaska.

MS. EKSTROM stated that she did; working one day a week, while raising her children.

CHAIR WILSON cited her own work in Tok, Alaska, and said that it is good to have a board member who brings a firsthand rural perspective.

[3:29:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked what characterizes a family nurse practitioner (FNP) from a nurse practitioner (NP).

MS. EKSTROM responded that an FNP is qualified to attend to patients ranging from the age of newborn through geriatric.

[3:29:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES noted her educational background.

[3:30:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked her to address the nursing shortage in Alaska, and her approach to the issue of safe nursing practices.

MS. EKSTROM suggested that the training offered at the local University of Alaska campuses is helpful in providing nurses to the rural areas.

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH inquired if she has worked at an urban hospital, and asked her to address the mandatory overtime issue.

MS. EKSTROM responded that she has worked in an urban location. Work in a hospital is very demanding, she said, and it is difficult to work effectively beyond a 12 hour shift.

[3:33:44 PM](#)

AGNES JACK, Appointee, to the Board of Nursing, noted highlights of her resume.

[3:34:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked her to comment on Alaska's nursing shortage, and the issue regarding nurses working overtime.

MS. JACK acknowledged the nursing shortage, and said it is difficult to lure, and retain, nurses in bush areas.

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked if the high turnover was specific to the climactic conditions, or due to the work hours.

MS. JACK speculated that both the challenging climate, and the long hours, are contributing factors.

Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

[3:36:55 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be to redirect attention to the confirmation hearing on the appointment of Holly Steiner to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

HOLLY STEINER, Appointee, to the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives, apologized for her tardy call-in, and announced that it was a girl.

[3:39:08 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked how many babies she has delivered this year.

MS. STEINER answered five or six, thus far, and reported that she usually averages about 20 per month.

CHAIR WILSON informed her that her name was included in the previous motion for advancement. She thanked her for the follow-up call, and her willingness to serve.

[Her name was previously moved for advancement.]

[3:39:41 PM](#)

Board of Pharmacy

[3:39:53 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearings on the appointment of Kathe Boucha and Robert Young to the Board of Pharmacy.

[3:40:01 PM](#)

KATHE BOUCHA, Appointee, to the Board of Pharmacy, explained how she came to submit her resume, and said her willingness to serve, as a citizen participant, is primarily due to her interest in the standard operating procedures, and to address process improvement.

[3:40:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked her to describe the Kosova Foundation for Medical Development.

MS. BOUCHA explained that it is a non-profit foundation that receives international funding. The name was recently changed to the International Virtual E-Hospital Foundation. The foundation has created a telecommunications system to help Kosovo rebuild their medical system, and reconnect with the medical world.

[3:42:15 PM](#)

ROBERT YOUNG, Appointee, to the Board of Pharmacy, Director, Professional of Service Division, Mount Edgecombe Hospital, said he has been a long time pharmacist in the state, both in hospital and private sector settings. He provided further highlights from his resume, and stated that he is in his final year of law school. He said he holds a passion for safety.

[3:43:14 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON noted that he works full time as well as attends law school.

MR. YOUNG stated that he has been taking classes on-line, which helps with the logistics of work and school.

[3:43:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked the candidate to speak to the misuse of pharmaceutical drugs, and if information sharing between doctors is in need of improvement.

MR. YOUNG opined that a fair amount of drug misuse may occur and that information sharing may be the only means to dispel such activity. There is no machine to measure levels of pain for management purposes, he added.

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH inquired about the pharmacists' role regarding clients.

MR. YOUNG explained that under HIPPA [Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act] information can be shared, and could be considered an aspect of the treatment component, as part of the treatment is to prevent a patient from abusing a drug.

[3:46:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to forward the names of Geraldine Benshoof, Philip Schneider, Denise Ekstrom, Agnes Jack, Kathe Boucha, and Robert Young to the joint session of the House and Senate for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmations of Geraldine Benshoof, Philip Schneider, Denise Ekstrom, Agnes Jack, Kathe Boucha, and Robert Young were advanced from the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee.

[3:48:40 PM](#)

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

[3:48:45 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearings to appoint Richard Lum and George Troxel, to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

[The motion for advancement to be combined with that of the Board of Examiners Optometry.]

[3:49:10 PM](#)

RICHARD LUM, Appointee, to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, cited his involvement in advocacy work for employee rights, and bargaining experience, as qualifications to serve. He sees this as a time for all of his skills to come together.

[3:50:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH noted her previous relationship with the candidate, and provided a personal recommendation.

[3:52:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES noted his previous relationship with the candidate, and provided a personal recommendation.

[3:53:33 PM](#)

GEORGE TROXEL, Appointee, to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, Superintendent, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District;, provided a brief biography and stated that he is familiar with the "landscape of schools and education in the State of Alaska, and knows ... the challenges and opportunities that exist." He is particularly interested in the subject of ethics.

[3:55:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER provided a personal recommendation.

[3:55:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES asked if this appointment is to the superintendent position on the commission.

MR. TROXEL said yes.

Board of Examiners Optometry

[3:56:00 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the final order of business would be the confirmation hearing to appoint Dr. Jill Matheson, O.D., to the Board of Examiners Optometry.

[3:56:41 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON stated that the appointee is not present and requested that the committee review her written qualifications.

[3:57:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES said that her qualifications appear to be in order, and offered that his office has received no objections to her appointment.

[3:57:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked what the "TPA" endorsement, in her resume, represents.

[3:58:00 PM](#)

TRACY OMEN, Executive Director, Alaska Optometric Association, stated that Dr. Matheson is currently the chair of the Optometry Board, and a board member for the past four years. The TPA indicates that she holds the highest level of certification, and is authorized to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents (TPAs).

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON inquired if that is the license criteria most recently allowed.

MS OMAN clarified that optometrists have had the ability to prescribe pharmaceutical agents since 1992, but in 2007 it was amplified to include systemic pharmaceuticals, as well as the topical.

[3:59:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to forward the names of Richard Lum, George Troxel, and Jill Matheson to the joint session of the House and Senate for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmations of Richard Lum, George Troxel, and Jill Matheson were advanced from the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee.

[4:00:00 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON thanked all of the appointees for their willingness to serve the state on their respective boards and commissions. Further, she announced the pending meeting schedule.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.