

NEBRASKA BOARD OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY

MEETING MINUTES

February 13, 2026

ROLL CALL

The meeting of the Board of Medicine and Surgery was called to order by Chairperson, Wesley Zeger, DO, at 9:03 a.m. on February 13, 2026, at the Hampton Inn & Suites, 7343 Husker Circle, Lincoln, Nebraska 68504. The meeting was conducted In-Person and by WebEx. The following members answered the roll call:

Wesley Zeger, DO, Chairperson
Jeffrey Howorth, Secretary
Rachel Blake, MD
Jodanne Hedrick, DO
Adam Kuenning, JD, LLM, Chairperson
John Massey, MD

Absent: Mark Goodman, MD, Vice-Chairperson
Brian Keegan, MD

A quorum was present, and the meeting convened.

Also present to participate in the meeting: Vonda Apking, Program Manager and Jan Gadeken-Harris, Health Licensing Coordinator with the Licensure Unit; Mindy Lester, Assistant Attorney General; Randy Clark and Hayle Alvarado, Investigators with the Investigation Unit; Tricia Allen, Program Manager with the Investigation Unit; Ellie Rohr, DHHS Department Attorney and Jessie Enfield, DHHS Licensure Support.

Zeger announced that there is a copy of all the public documents being reviewed at this meeting available in the meeting room pursuant to the Open Meetings Act.

In accordance with Neb. Rev. Stat. § 84-1411 of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act, copies of the agenda were e-mailed to the Board members and other interested parties, posted on the DHHS web site at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx> and posted on the Bulletin Board at the entrance to the Nebraska State Office Building February 2, 2026.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Howorth moved, seconded by Hedrick, to approve adoption of the agenda with the Chair having the authority to rearrange agenda items as needed. Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

Zeger, announced that there is one change of the Agenda with the Hearing scheduled as Items 12-14 being postponed to the next Board meeting on March 13, 2026.

ADOPTION OF THE APPLICATION(S) CONSENT AGENDA

Massey moved, seconded by Howorth to have the following applications removed from the consent agenda:

Benson, Robert, MD – Initial Physician application
Simchuk, Darilia, MD – TVFP application

Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

LEGISLATION UPDATES

Amy Reynoldson, Executive Vice President and Paul Henderson, Vice President, Advocacy & Regulation, In-House Counsel with the NMA (Nebraska Medical Association) were present to discuss and provide updates to the Board for the 109th Legislature.

LB1212 - Provide for licensure of internationally trained physicians under the Uniform Credentialing Act
Notice of Hearing - February 11, 2026

To learn more regarding this Bill go to:

https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=63078&docnum=LB1212&leg=109

The Board previously discussed LB1212 at an Emergency meeting on February 9, 2026. The Board opposes LB1212 as currently written. A Letter of Opposition was delivered by Hedrick via oral testimony to the Legislature at the Hearing on February 11, 2026.

Below is the Board's Letter of Opposition delivered by Hedrick:

Chairperson and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Dr. Jodanne Hedrick, and I am here on behalf of the Nebraska Board of Medicine and Surgery.

We recognize and share the Legislature's concern about access to care in rural Nebraska. Many of our communities face significant physician shortages and long travel distances for care. Patients in these areas deserve timely access to services and a stable healthcare workforce. We appreciate the intent of this bill to help address those needs.

The Board's first and foremost responsibility, however, is public safety. Our statutory mission is to ensure that all physicians practicing in Nebraska meet consistent standards for safe, competent, and high-quality care. For that reason, we must respectfully oppose Legislative Bill 1212 in its current form and recommend several important revisions to ensure that any pathway forward maintains the highest standards for patient care.

First, the bill does not clearly require verification of board certification or equivalent specialty certification in the physician's home country. While many internationally trained physicians are exceptionally well trained, confirming specialty certification or its equivalent is an important measure to ensure consistent standards of medical expertise and clinical readiness. Including this requirement would strengthen public confidence and help ensure that patients—particularly those in rural communities—receive care from highly trained professionals.

Second, the bill does not specifically state that the physician must have practiced medicine within the past 12 months. Recent, active clinical practice is an important indicator of current competence. Adding language requiring recent practice would help ensure that physicians entering Nebraska's workforce are clinically current and prepared to deliver safe care from day one.

Third, we recommend revising the terminology used in the bill. The current language referring to a "limited" or "restricted" license may create confusion, as those terms are presently associated in Nebraska with disciplinary actions. We suggest instead the use of the term "provisional license to practice," which more accurately reflects a structured transition period and avoids unintended implications for both physicians and the public.

We want to be clear: the Board supports thoughtful pathways that welcome qualified internationally trained physicians into Nebraska's workforce. These physicians contribute greatly to healthcare across our country. But rural communities deserve more than a temporary solution to shortages. They deserve competent, highly trained professionals who are prepared to practice safely within the U.S. healthcare system. Expanding access and maintaining high standards are not mutually exclusive goals. We can—and must—do both.

The Board stands ready to collaborate with the Legislature to strengthen this bill so that it both improves access to care and preserves the safeguards that protect patients. Public safety must remain the foundation of any licensure pathway.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the health of Nebraskans. I am happy to answer any questions. Jodanne W. Hedrick, DO member and representative of the Nebraska Board of Medicine and Surgery.

LB933 - Provide immunity for health care practitioners under the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Patient Protection Act

Notice of Hearing – February 19, 2026

To learn more regarding this Bill go to: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/109/PDF/Intro/LB933.pdf>

LB1234 - Adopt the Freestanding Birth Center Act

Notice of Hearing – February 12, 2026

To learn more regarding this Bill go to: <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/FloorDocs/109/PDF/Intro/LB1234.pdf>

The NMA, the DHHS Department and the Nursing Association do not support this Bill as written

REGULATIONS UPDATE

Currently there are no updates for the Board.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Blake moved, seconded by Kuenning to approve January 9, 2026, minutes as written. Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time of the meeting.

INVESTIGATIONAL REPORTS, DISCIPLINARY REPORTS, APPLICATION REVIEW – CLOSED SESSION

Blake moved, seconded by Kuenning, to go to closed session at 9:35 a.m. for the purpose of review and discussion of investigative reports, disciplinary reports, licensure applications, and other confidential information, and for the prevention of needless injury to the reputation of the individuals. Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

The Board members returned to Open Session at 11:53 a.m.

APPLICATION REVIEW – OPEN SESSION

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON APPLICATIONS FOR LICENSURE AND REGISTRATION

Physician Initial Application(s) (1)

BENSON, ROBERT WILLIAM, MD – application for initial license to practice medicine and surgery. Hedrick moved, seconded by Howorth, to recommend approval of the license to practice medicine and surgery. Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

Physician TVFP (Temporary Visiting Faculty Permit) Application(s) (1)

SIMCHUK, DARILIA, MD – application for a TVFP to practice medicine and surgery. Hedrick moved, seconded by Howorth, to recommend tabling the application for additional information. Voting aye: Blake, Hedrick, Howorth, Kuenning, Massey and Zeger. Voting nay: None. Absent: Goodman and Keegan. Abstain: None. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time of the meeting.

BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

The next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2026, in the Husker Conference Room at the Hampton Inn & Suites. To see a complete list of the projected schedule for the 2026 schedule, visit the DHHS website:
<https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Pages/Agendas-and-Minutes.aspx>

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Zeger, Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

signature available upon request

Jeffrey Howorth, Secretary
Board of Medicine and Surgery