

GEORGIA BOARD OF PHARMACY
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM)
625 Old Peachtree Rd NW, Suwanee, GA 30024
Minutes for September 10, 2025 Board Meeting

Board Members present:

Cecil Cordle, PharmD, President
Young Chang, Vice-President
Michael Azzolin, PharmD
Jim Bracewell
Michael Brinson
Michael Farmer
Chuck Page
Dean Stone

Board Staff present:

Clint Joiner, Executive Director
Michael Karnbach, Director, GDNA,
Alec Mathis, Deputy Director, GDNA
Emily Lobeck, Special Agent
Dowlin Ryals, Assistant Attorney General
Itovia Evans, Deputy Director of Licensing
Angela Johnson, Board Administrative
Secretary

Visitors:

Ben Wright, The Hudson Group
Greg Mullis, Midnight Rider Consulting
Thomas Tucker, Cap City
Jennifer Sain, Walgreens
Kamryn Wham, Georgia Hospital Association
Madison Marquess, UGA COP
Carmen McGhee, UGA COP
Niyah Brown, UGA COP
Kara Martin, UGA COP
Torri Mullins, UGA COP

Jonathan Marquess, GPhA/ AIP
Jordan Khail, UGA College of Pharmacy (COP)
Gary Wright, UGA Veterinary Hospital
Mary Kate Snead, Guardian
Christi Hays, Emory
Charday Norris, PCOM
Julie Wickman, PCOM
Amazing Warren, UGA COP
Lauricee White, UGA COP
Leonardo Ashem, UGA COP

Open Session

President Cordle established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

President Cordle greeted the members of the public who were present.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Stone made a motion to approve the Open and Executive Session minutes from the August 13, 2025, meeting. Mr. Brinson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Report of Licenses Issued

Director Joiner reported that the Board has issued 715 licenses since the last meeting. Mr. Brinson made a motion to ratify the list of licenses issued. Mr. Stone seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Petitions for Rule Waiver or Variance

Pinnacle Treatment Centers of Georgia (Health Qwest: Warner Robins, Macon, Savannah, Stockbridge, Canton, Douglasville and Buford – Variance Request of Rule 480-10-.12(d)1

Pinnacle Treatment OTP requested a variance from the minimum equipment requirements for prescription departments, specifically regarding the need for a refrigerator. They stated that the centers dispense only buprenorphine and methadone, neither of which requires refrigeration.

It was noted that each location maintains a functional refrigerator in the nursing area, with a thermometer and a temperature log for storing PPD tests. As no medications requiring refrigeration

are being kept in the pharmacy, Pinnacle Treatment OTP requested to exemption from the requirement to maintain a separate refrigerator in that area.

The Board discussed the scope of its role in determining "substantial hardship" when considering variance requests. The Board concluded that requiring Pinnacle to maintain a second, empty refrigerator in the pharmacy, in addition to the one they stated they already have in the nursing area, would be a hardship. The variance for the pharmacy refrigerator was approved with a clear stipulation: should Pinnacle's medical inventory change to include any medications that require refrigeration, they will be obligated to acquire and maintain the necessary refrigeration equipment.

Mr. Brinson made a motion to approve the request for variance. Mr. Page seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Correspondences

The Georgia Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers (GAMES) sent the Board a letter to express concerns regarding the licensure and regulation of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers. Mr. Page asked if anyone was present on behalf of GAMES. It was established that a representative was not present.

GAMES stated in its letter that they are concerned that the Board is licensing out-of-state companies, such as Synapse Health, that do not have a physical location in Georgia as required by state law. They believe this practice undermines the integrity of the law and could put patients at risk.

Director Joiner stated that while the Board does issue DME permits to out of state entities, GAMES's legal conclusion regarding this action is incorrect. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 26-4-51(c), the Board is explicitly authorized to license out-of-state manufacturers, wholesalers, and distributors that provide durable medical equipment directly to consumers, provided they are Medicare-enrolled and licensed in another state. This statute also exempts these entities from the requirement of maintaining an in-state office.

The letter also raises concerns about the recent licensure of Elizabeth Sure Ivester, an individual reportedly involved in a \$5.4 million Georgia Medicaid fraud scheme. GAMES believes this raises questions about the Board's vetting process and monitoring of licensees.

Regarding the allegation of licensing an individual with a history of Medicaid fraud, Director Joiner stated that the Board cannot comment. Under Georgia law, applications and complaints, the contents of such files, and deliberations thereupon are confidential. The proper channel for GAMES raise this concern with the Board is to file a formal, substantiated complaint. To the Board's knowledge, no such complaint has been filed by GAMES.

The Board concluded that a response to GAMES should be prepared by Director Joiner. It was also determined that a meeting with GAMES was not necessary at this time as they had not presented any new or actionable information.

Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency – Mr. Michael Karnbach

Director Karnbach introduced Special Agent Emily Lobeck and Ms. Carla Leary.

Director Karnbach reported that GDNA has conducted 465 inspections year-to-date and received 233 complaints year-to-date.

Attorney General's Report – Mr. Dowlin Ryals

No Report.

Executive Director's Report – Mr. James Joiner

Policy for Administratively Processing Licenses

The Board reviewed the policy regarding the administrative approval of licenses, a policy that was last substantively updated in 2013. The discussion focused on a few key areas: Misdemeanor documentation and Pharmacy Technician non-disclosure of arrests.

Misdemeanor Documentation: The Board debated whether to establish a time limit for requiring documentation for misdemeanors from applicants. The current policy requires documentation for any misdemeanor, regardless of how long ago it occurred. It was suggested that a 10-year limit be adopted, which would be consistent with other board policies and would account for the fact that many applicants committed offenses when they were younger.

The question was raised whether this 10-year limit should be different for offenses involving theft or fraud, as these are considered crimes of moral turpitude. Director Joiner advised that while the law gives the Board a narrow view of these crimes, it would still have the autonomy to exercise discretion and request documentation for older offenses on a case-by-case basis. The Board decided to take this issue for further review.

Technician Non-Disclosure: The Board noted a high rate of pharmacy technician applicants who fail to disclose prior offenses. Mr. Farmer commented that 10 out of the 19 applications being reviewed on this agenda involved arrest records that had not been disclosed.

Director Joiner advised that it is often due to applicants believing their records have been "wiped clean," but a background check will still reveal the offenses. He pointed out that this is no excuse because the language on the application and renewal specifically states, "**Have you ever been arrested [Emphasis Added]** or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor (other than minor traffic violation) or entered a plea of guilty, nolo contendere or under the First Offender Act, or been sanctioned by another board or agency?"

The Board is considering a policy that would include a penalty for non-disclosure, such as a waiting period for reapplication. It was clarified that the administrative staff's policy has been updated to ensure that any failure to disclose, no matter how old the offense, must be brought to the Board's attention for review.

The Board agreed to table the discussion for a future meeting.

Legal Services – Mr. James Joiner

Director Joiner reported that the Board had several rules come back with approved active supervision from the governor's office and they will be sent to the Secretary of State.

President Cordle asked Director Joiner to explain the rules process.

Director Joiner advised that the board must pass rules according to the procedures outlined in the Administrative Procedures Act. He explained that a new rule begins as an idea and is drafted into formal language. The full Board will then review the draft and vote in open session on whether to approve language of the rule as drafted, amend and approve, or table for further consideration (this vote to approve is often referred to as a "vote to post"). If approved, the rule language is then posted for public review and written comment, and a public hearing is scheduled. At the hearing, the board reviews all written and oral public comments before voting to adopt the rule.

After a rule is adopted, it is sent to the governor's office for "active supervisory review." The governor's office reviews the rule to ensure it is legally sound and aligns with public policy, after which they issue (or decline to issue) a certificate of active supervision. If a certificate is issued, the rule and the certificate are then sent to the Secretary of State's office, which reviews them for proper form and assigns an official effective date for the rule.

The following rules have been released by the Governor's Office with approved active supervision and will be sent to the Secretary of State's Office for an effective date.

Rule 480-5-.03 (Code of Professional Conduct): The language was modernized and clarified, and the word "knowingly" was eliminated as an element of the offense of false or misleading advertising.

Chapter 480-7C (Third-Party Logistics Providers): This is a new chapter of rules specifically adopted for third-party logistics providers.

Rules 480-15-.02 and 480-15-.04 (Pharmacy Technicians): The continuing education requirement for technicians was updated to align with the statute that requires two hours of immunization continuing education. This two-hour requirement is separate from the one-time CE waiver that was granted last year.

Rule 480-24-.02 (Personnel): The rule was clarified to remove specific definitions for "consultant pharmacist" and "vendor pharmacist," and instead, it now outlines the duties and responsibilities of pharmacists in those roles.

Rule 480-24-.03 (Physical Requirements): Language was clarified, and capitalization was changed to ensure consistency with the rest of the chapter.

Rule 480-24-.06 (Destruction of Drugs): This rule now provides for the on-site destruction of controlled substances and includes other clarifying and corrective language.

Mr. Farmer inquired about when to expect the effective dates for these rules so they can be added to the newsletter. Director Joiner advised that they should come from the Secretary of State soon after they're submitted. Director Karnbach noted that these rules cannot be enforced until they are officially adopted.

Discussion Topics

In an effort to avoid a two-day work session in November, the Board will be adding a new section to the agenda: Old Business/Follow-up. The new section aims to address outstanding items more efficiently and provides timetables for discussion.

Task	Initial Date	Board / Staff	Return Date
Define Inpatient for Hospital-at-Home (480-13-.01)	8/1/2024	Azzolin, Joiner	10/22/2025
Review Approved Providers List	9/1/2024	Page, Joiner, Karnbach	10/22/2025
Intern License Renewal	12/1/2024	Evans, Joiner	10/22/2025
Remote Entry Work for PHTC	1/1/2025	Azzolin, Stone	10/22/2025
Reinstatement Pathway for PHTC	2/1/2025	Evans, Joiner	10/22/2025
RAMS Licensing & Changes	3/1/2025	Azzolin, Karnbach, Stone	10/22/2025
Licensee Info Which Must be Public	3/1/2025	Joiner, Stone	10/22/2025
Remote Order Entry Signage	4/1/2025	Joiner	10/22/2025

Elimination (480-10A-.08)			
Laminar Flow Hood	7/1/2025	Azzolin, Stone, Joiner	11/19/2025
Smart Lockers	8/1/2025	Brinson, Page, Karnbach	11/19/2025
Drone Delivery	8/1/2025	Farmer, Page	11/19/2025
480-24-.06 - Review of Pharmacy/Pharmacist Language	8/1/2025	Chang, Farmer	11/19/2025
Amend Interim CO	8/1/2025	Joiner, Karnbach	11/19/2025
C-II Pickup Identification Req. Clarification	8/1/2025	Joiner, Karnbach	11/19/2025
OOS Pharmacies Shipping into GA: Anything we can do?	9/1/2025	Joiner, Karnbach	11/19/2025
Amend Rule 480-25-.03	7/1/2025	Joiner	12/17/2025
Hydration Clinics	8/1/2025	Brinson, Chang, Page, Joiner	12/17/2025
Pharmacist Initial Application Finger Printing	8/1/2025	Evans, Joiner, Karnbach	12/17/2025
Delegation of Admin Auth. To Approve ROE Policies	8/1/2025	Cordle, Joiner	12/17/2025
Adopt Universal MPJE?	8/1/2025	Chang, Karnbach	12/17/2025
Allow Students to Take MPJE Earlier?	8/1/2025	Chang, Karnbach	12/17/2025
Tail Period for Facilities with CHOW	9/1/2025	Joiner, Karnbach	12/17/2025

Pharmacy Technician Ratio

The Board discussed a potential legislative change to the pharmacy technician to pharmacist ratio. It was suggested to change the ratio from one pharmacist to four technicians (two of whom must be certified) to one pharmacist to four technicians with no certification requirement. The Board expressed interest in moving forward with this as agency legislation.

Director Joiner clarified that the Board can recommend "agency legislation" directly to the governor's office.

Legislative Changes

The Board also agreed to pursue a few other legislative and rule changes:

- **Rule Change for Facility Ownership:** A change was proposed to allow a temporary "tail period" for pharmacies changing ownership. This would allow for an overlap between the old and new licenses to give the new owners time to secure new DEA registrations and other contracts.
- **Provisional Licensing for New Pharmacies:** The Board discussed the possibility of a new rule to allow a provisional license number to be issued for new pharmacies. This would help new owners obtain DEA and other contracts while the pharmacy build-out is being completed, which would streamline the process and reduce the financial burden of waiting for a permanent license.
- **Outdated Drug Returns:** The Board agreed to pursue a legislative change to O.C.G.A. § 26-4-115(c). The proposed change would remove the one-year expiration date limitation for drugs that can be exempted from the full credit return requirement. This would give the Board more discretion to exempt expensive, low-utilization drugs (like sodium thiosulfate) to encourage hospitals to stock them.
- **Remote Technician Definition:** A legislative change was proposed to the definition of "pharmacy technician" in 26-4-5(32) to remove the word "in." This would clarify that technicians can work remotely and would make it easier to create a rule that allows remote technicians to not count against the pharmacy's on-site ratio.

Mr. Stone made a motion for the legal staff to draft and submit these four changes as agency legislation by the filing deadline. Mr. Brinson seconded, and the Board voted in favor of the motion. The drafts will be sent to the Board for review after submission.

President Cordle asked if anyone had any questions or comments. President Cordle reminded everyone that the next scheduled meeting of the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy will be held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at the Board's office located at 2 Martin Luther King Jr Drive SE, East Tower, 11th floor, Atlanta, GA 30334.

He requested that any department or member of the public that wishes to be added to an upcoming meeting must submit the information prior to the Wednesday before the scheduled meeting to be considered for the agenda. He thanked the public for their attendance and participation.

Mr. Brinson made a motion and Mr. Stone seconded, and the Board voted to enter into **Executive Session** in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 43-1-19(h) and § 43-1-2(h) to deliberate and to receive information on applications, investigative reports, and the Assistant Attorney General's report. Voting in favor of the motion were those present who included Michael Azzolin, Jim Bracewell, Michael Brinson, Young Chang, Cecil Cordle, Michael Farmer, Chuck Page, and Dean Stone.

Executive Session

Appearances: MM & BS

Georgia Drugs and Narcotics Agency - Mr. Michael Karnbach
A.M.R.I. Suspension

Cognizant's Report – Mr. Young Chang

A35617	B35620	T35639	B35764	B35777	B35857	B35861	A35874
A35875	25-789	25-504	25-728	B35466	B35856	B35810	B35812
B35832	B35834	B35838	B35858	B35865	B35868	B35870	25-25

Attorney General's Report – Mr. Dowlin Ryals, Assistant Attorney General
Mr. Ryals presented the following consent orders for acceptance:

BWD	WSCP	WMS	CP	SS
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Counterproposals: N/A

Status Open Cases

ESP	AH	PAJ	BTY	WP
AMC	VLRL	WG	MVI	CHEL

Executive Director's Report – Mr. Clint Joiner
No Report.

Legal Services – Mr. Clint Joiner
GDC

Applications

BF	DR	DH	ET	LB	RN	SS	SP	VJ	RP	JT	MB	LH	BC	BM
ZS	CP	AM	SM	JG	DD	HY	MF	AS	GD					

Correspondences/Requests

BI	EI	ICS	CA	AL	PHL	PC	SCS	SHL	THG	PHX
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Miscellaneous

AN	ED	KK	LJ	TT	AE	SM	YG	AL	MW	JH	AG
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At the close of the Executive Session, President Cordle declared the meeting to be back in Open Session.

Open Session

Mr. Farmer made a motion for the Board to take the following actions:

Appearances:

MM	Appearance after OMPE	Approve renewal w/ Private Consent Order
BS	Appearance to Discuss Denial of her Application	Denial upheld. She can reply after her probation has been completed

Cognizant's Report – Mr. Young Chang

GDNA Case #	Licensee	Recommendation
A35617	DMB	Letter of Concern
B35620	YDP / FA	Letter of Concern to the PIC
T35639	JC	Revoke License or Flag if Lapsed
B35764	QA	Letter of Concern
B35777	MIS / ELB	Close & Refer to Medical Board
B35857	CP / JSQ	Letter of Concern to PIC
B35861	TWC	Close & Refer to Medical Board
A35874	ABL	Close
A35875	SHL	Close
25-789	STL	Pulled from this Agenda and will be updated
25-504	RDDSENCI dba RSC	Approve Application and refer to AG's Office
25-728	SAS / SUSP	Null & Void the Researcher Permit
B35466	PAH	Close
B35856	CP / FVB	Misfill Guidance #1A
B35810	WP	Close
B35812	WG	Close
B35832	MDC	Close
B35834	RCO & FS / KR	Close
B35838	WG	Close
B35858	JRL	Close
B35865	PCSS	Close
B35868	KD	Close
B35870	WG	Close
25-25	ASP	Close

Applications

Licensee	Type of License	Status
BF	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
DR	Pharmacy Technician	Denied
DH	Pharmacy Technician	Approved

ET	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
LB	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
RN	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
SS	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
SP	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
VJ	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
RP	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
JT	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
MB	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
LH	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
BC	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
BM	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
ZS	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
CP	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
AM	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
SM	Pharmacy Technician	Approved
JG	Pharmacist	Approved
DD	Pharmacist	Approved
HY	Certification of DTM	Approved with a stipulation
MF	Certification of DTM	Approved with a stipulation
AS	Nuclear Pharmacist	Approved
GDC	Retail Pharmacy	Approved

Correspondences/Requests

BI	Notice of Discipline	No Action
EI	Notice of Discipline	No Action
ICS	Notice of Discipline	No Action
CA	Notice of Discipline	No Action
AL	Notice of Discipline	No Action
PHL	Notice of Discipline	No Action
PC	Notice of Discipline	GDNA will investigate
SCS	Notice of Discipline	No Action
SHL	Notice of Discipline	No Action
THG	Notice of Discipline	No Action
PHX	Notice of Discipline	No Action
AN	Extension Request for NAPLEX and Application through 11/30/25	Approved through 12/31/25
ED	Request for 30-day Extension	Approved
KK	Request 2 nd Extension through 11/30/25	Approved through 12/31/25
LJ	Request for 4 th Attempt MPJE	Approved
TT	Request for 4th Attempt NAPLEX & 5th Attempt MPJE	Approved
AE	Request Extension through 12/31/25	Approved
SM	Request for 6th Attempt NAPLEX	Approved
YG	Request for 4 th Attempt NAPLEX	Approved
AL	Request for 4 th Attempt NAPLEX & MPJE	Approved
MW	Requesting Fine Reduction	Denied
JH	Results of his Evaluation and steps to reinstatement	Approved
AG	Request to Terminate Consent Order	Approved

Mr. Stone seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. There being no

further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the Georgia Board of Pharmacy will be held on Wednesday, October 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. at 2 MLK Jr., Drive, SE, 11th Floor, East Tower, Atlanta, GA 30334.

Minutes recorded by Angela Johnson, Board Administrative Secretary

Edited by J. Clinton Joiner, II, Executive Director