

Patient Safety in Expanded Therapeutic Procedures Workgroup

Inaugural Meeting Minutes

Date: May 6, 2026

Time: 8:00 p.m. Eastern / 7:00 p.m. Central

Location: Videoconference

Members Present: Dr. Mary Beth Morris, O.D., Dr. Ian McWherter, O.D., Dr. Aaron McNulty, O.D., Dr. Mohammed Naja, O.D., Dr. Inder Singal, M.D., Dr. Lawrence Tenkman, M.D., Dr. Nathan Lighthizer, O.D.

Call to Order

Dr. Mary Beth Morris, O.D., President of the Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners, called the inaugural meeting of the Patient Safety in Expanded Therapeutic Procedures Workgroup to order.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Morris welcomed members and thanked them for their willingness to serve. She explained that the workgroup was established to evaluate Kentucky's expanded therapeutic procedures credentialing process and provide recommendations to the full Board, with patient safety and public protection as the guiding principles.

Dr. Morris reviewed the background leading to the workgroup, including the October 2025 Attorney General opinion, the Board's ongoing review of licensure issues involving waivers and alternative testing, recent Board leadership and counsel changes, and the Board's separate decision to proactively review expanded therapeutic credentialing standards.

Introductions

Members introduced themselves and described their professional backgrounds and current roles in optometry, ophthalmology, academic optometry, and clinical practice.

Purpose and Scope of Workgroup

Dr. Morris stated that the workgroup serves in an advisory capacity to the Kentucky Board of Optometric Examiners. The workgroup's responsibilities include reviewing current standards, evaluating training and credentialing pathways, and developing recommendations for Board consideration.

The discussion will focus on expanded therapeutic procedures, including laser procedures, with emphasis on education, competency, credentialing, preceptorship/proctorship, testing, and ongoing oversight.

Dr. Morris noted that, because the workgroup was formed by the Board, its meetings are subject to Kentucky open meetings requirements. The group discussed the importance of transparency, accountability, and ensuring that any discussions or draft materials are handled appropriately under open meetings requirements.

Discussion

The workgroup discussed whether the primary areas needing review are training, testing, proctorship/preceptorship, or a combination of those areas.

Members generally agreed that optometry education and didactic training appear to be strong, but several members expressed that the proctorship/preceptorship process may benefit from additional standardization. Discussion included:

- Whether performing laser skills in vivo utilizing proctorship/preceptorship is more appropriate than performing skills in vitro.
- Whether Kentucky should adopt clearer criteria for approving preceptors/proctors.
- Whether the number of approved preceptors should be limited or more carefully vetted.
- Whether preceptors should meet minimum experience requirements.
- Whether preceptors should attest to actively performing laser procedures.
- Whether Kentucky should develop a standardized rubric or checklist for evaluating competency.
- Whether procedural “timeouts” and confirmation of laser mode should be required elements of competency evaluation.
- Whether credentialing should be procedure-specific or whether a broader laser certification approach should be considered.
- How new laser technology, including dual-function lasers, should be addressed.
- Whether testing mechanisms should include state-level, national-level, practical, written, or proctored live-patient components.

The group also discussed the importance of not overreacting to any single publicized incident while still ensuring that Kentucky’s process reflects best practices and public protection.

Dual-Function Laser Safety

The workgroup discussed potential safety concerns related to combination lasers, including the risk of mode-selection errors. Members discussed whether manufacturers should be encouraged to improve alerts, verbal prompts, visual indicators, or fail-safe mechanisms when switching between laser modes.

Proposed Meeting Schedule

The group discussed a proposed expedited timeline, with the goal of reporting recommendations to the full Board no later than July 1, 2026.

The next meeting was scheduled for **May 18, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern / 7:00 p.m. Central**. Additional tentative meeting dates discussed included **June 1, 2026**, and **June 17, 2026**, subject to member availability.

Next Steps

The following next steps were identified:

1. Begin drafting a framework or discussion document outlining potential changes to the preceptorship/proctorship process based on the group's discussion.
2. Research dual-function laser safety issues, including examples from other professions or regulatory models.
3. Members will continue reviewing current Kentucky requirements and be prepared to discuss possible recommendations at the next meeting.
4. Dr. Morris will clarify open meetings/open records guidance regarding distribution of draft materials and email communications.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Dr. McWherter and seconded Dr. McNulty to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: May 18, 2026, at 8:00 p.m. Eastern / 7:00 p.m. Central.