

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
PALLIATIVE CARE AND QUALITY OF LIFE
February 11, 2022**

Alabama Department of Public Health
The RSA Tower-Virtual Meeting
Montgomery, AL

Members Present

Kristi A. Acker, D.N.P, Ph.D., Chair
Karen Marlowe, Pharm.D., Co-Chair
Gregory W. Ayers, M.D.
Leigh Ann Matthews, M.S.N.
Timothy Mayhall, M.Div.
Rodney O. Tucker, M.D., M.M.M.
John G. Beard, M.B.A.
Mary Ann Somers, M.A.Ed.
Sarah Pederson, Ph.D.

Member Absent

Richard J. Brockman, J.D.

Staff Present

Scott Harris, M.D., M.P.H., State Health Officer
Mary McIntyre, M.D., M.P.H., Chief Medical Officer
Jacqueline Milledge, Director, Bureau of Health Provider Standards (BHPS)
Patricia Watson, State Program Director, BHPS
Kierra Montgomery, Office Manager, BHPS

Guests Present

Rosemary Blackmon, Alabama Hospital Association (AlaHA)
Carol Snowden, AlaHA
Angie Smith, Alabama Nursing Home Association (ANHA)

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2021:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2021, meeting as distributed; the motion carried unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE STATEWIDE STATUS:

Dr. McIntyre provided an update on the statewide status of COVID-19, stating that COVID cases were decreasing; however, the state had not reached its goal of 10 percent. With the Omicron surge, the state saw numbers never seen before.

Dr. McIntyre also stated that there were now some subvariants of the variants that do not appear to have any increase in severity.

OPIOID PRESCRIBING AND REGULATION UPDATES:

Dr. Ayers updated the Council on the recent issue concerning hospice physicians being exempt from registering as a pain clinic. After a recent investigation, it was shown that 2 out of 30 physicians did not meet the requirements for the exemption.

Dr. Tucker recommended that board-certified palliative care physicians be exempt also. Dr. Ayers suggested the Council send a recommendation in writing to the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners.

COVID-19 IMPACT ON PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE PATIENTS:

The Council discussed the vaccine mandate concerning the types of staff required to be vaccinated under the Medicare program.

SURROGATE DECISION-MAKER AND NOTARY REQUIREMENT UPDATE:

Dr. Ayers updated the Council on the notary requirement status, stating House Bill 191 passed last week in the House of Representatives. It will now go to the Senate for approval.

OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Dr. Kristi Acker discussed campaign ideas to promote palliative care. She asked that the Council bring to the next meeting something concrete which can be put into action.

Dr. Acker plans to ask Stacey Sinclair from the Center for Advanced Palliative Care to speak at the next Council meeting. She also asked Rosemary Blackmon to speak about the community coalitions.


Dr. Tucker announced the Southeast Institute for Innovation in Palliative Care and Supportive Care is planning an in-person meeting for November 2022. The theme will be "Communication, Culture, and Care in the American South."

NEXT MEETING DATE:

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for May 13, 2022.



Kristi A. Acker, DNP, PhD., Chair
State Advisory Council on Palliative Care and Quality of Life



Jacqueline D. Milledge, Director
Bureau of Health Provider Standards
Alabama Department of Public Health