

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NEW JERSEY SMALL EMPLOYER HEALTH BENEFITS PROGRAM BOARD
HELD TELEPHONICALLY PURSUANT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER 103 (MURPHY)
January 18, 2023**

Members participating: Herbert Ames; Robert Benkert (United); Alison Birzon (Cigna); Jess Bowker (Oscar Garden State); Gary Cupo; Margaret Koller; Thomas Pownall (Aetna Health); Jason Premus (Horizon); Adam Young (AmeriHealth).

Others participating: Ellen DeRosa, Executive Director; Jeffrey Posta, Deputy Attorney General.

I. Call to Order

E. DeRosa called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. She announced that notice of the meeting was provided to three newspapers of general circulation and the State House Press Corps, and posted at the Department of Banking and Insurance (“DOBI”), on the DOBI website, and at the Office of the Secretary of State in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

E. DeRosa noted that, pursuant to P.L. 2020, c. 2, as a result of the state of emergency and public health emergency declared by Governor Murphy on March 9, 2020 through Executive Order 103, as subsequently extended,¹ due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SEH Board’s regularly scheduled meeting is being held entirely telephonically rather than at the Board’s offices in Trenton. She stated that, in accordance with P.L. 2020 c. 11, electronic notice of the meeting and the means by which the public could attend the meeting telephonically was posted on the Board’s website, and issued electronically to all known interested parties. E. DeRosa determined that a quorum was present, and that voting would be by roll call.

E. DeRosa explained that she did not include the name of a Commissioner’s designee in the role call since no replacement designee has been named following the retirement of Gale Simon.

Members of the public were asked to identify themselves and are listed at the end of these minutes.

II. Public Comments

No members of the public attended the meeting.

III. Minutes – December 21, 2022; December 29, 2022

¹ Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 26:13-3(b), a Public Health Emergency lasts for 30 days unless extended, while States of Emergency declared in accordance with N.J.S.A. App A:9-33 et seq. remain in effect until declared ended by a subsequent executive order. The Public Health Emergency was continuously extended through multiple executive orders until E.O. 244 (Murphy), issued June 4, 2021, declared the Public Health Emergency ended. However, Governor Murphy has not yet ended the State of Emergency established by E.O. 103 (Murphy). Thus, the Board continues to meet remotely, and public access is limited to telephonic means. (Notably, E.O. 280, issued January 11, 2022, resulted in another Public Health Emergency due to COVID-19, which was extended by E.O. 288 on February 10, 2022, then lifted by E.O. 292 on March 4, 2022.)

H. Ames made a motion, seconded by A. Young to approve the Open Session minutes of the meeting of December 21, 2022 without amendments. By roll call vote, the motion carried.

T. Pownall made a motion, seconded by A. Young to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 29, 2022 without amendments. By roll call vote, G. Cupo abstained, and all remaining members voted in favor the motion.

IV. Executive Director Report

E. DeRosa reported that the staff procedure used to review expenses prior to inclusion on the expense report for the Board required more than one person to review the invoices as well as review the recording of the expenses on the expense report. Most recently, R. Lenox would open invoices, review them, and then give the invoices to E. DeRosa for review. All approved invoices would then be presented on the expense report that was reviewed by E. DeRosa prior to presentation to the Board. Until the fiscal position is filled E. DeRosa asked if a Board member would review both the invoices and the expense report before the expense report is presented to the Board. The Board accepted M. Koller's offer to serve in this capacity.

E. DeRosa shared her concerns about staffing with the Board, noting that with the retirements of R. Lenox and C. McDevitt two sources of institutional memory are no longer available to the Board. E. DeRosa suggested that the Board consider filling the Deputy Executive Director position. In this way such a new staff person could learn some of the history of the Program and become familiar with the role of serving as staff to the Board while E. DeRosa continues as Executive Director. Any later transition in staff would be easier if there is some continuity. Although not the primary objective in hiring a Deputy Executive Director, it is possible that person may be a good candidate for the Executive Director position when that position needs to be filled. The Board agreed.

V. Election of New Vice Chair

E. DeRosa asked whether the Board was prepared to elect a new Vice Chair.

G. Cupo made a motion, seconded by M. Koller to elect T. Pownall as Vice Chair of the SEH Board through the Annual Meeting of the Board. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously, and T. Pownall was elected Vice Chair.

VI. Public Comments

None

VII. Close of Meeting

M. Koller made a motion, seconded by G. Cupo to adjourn the meeting. By roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously.

[The meeting adjourned at 10:45 A.M.]

Public known to be in attendance:

None