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August 1, 2016

To Nursing Stakeholders:

In follow up to our June 27, 2016 letter and the July 21, 2016 meeting, the Georgia Board of Nursing (GBON) writes to recap recent events and provide updates on developments surrounding Secretary Kemp's proposed Executive Director change for the Board of Nursing.

To review, in mid-June, Secretary Kemp advised GBON that Jim Cleghorn, GBON Executive Director, would be exchanged with the Executive Director of Boards of Cosmetology/Barbers and Librarians effective in 13 days from notification. While Secretary Kemp's stated rationale for this personnel change was a need for "cross-training" across different boards, this proposed plan does not represent true cross training. Secretary Kemp would instead trade a seasoned Executive Director with 6 years of nursing regulation experience for an Executive Director without healthcare and/or nursing experience.

Since Georgia law provides that GBON has the responsibility to approve the selection of a qualified Executive Director, GBON unanimously passed a motion of non-approval of the current Executive Director of the Boards of Cosmetology/Barbers and Librarians as GBON Executive Director.

GBON regulates over 158,000 licensees and over 11,000 APRN authorizations. Removing Mr. Cleghorn from GBON adversely affects the Board's ability to carry out its statutory mission of public protection. Our key concerns with this personnel change are:

- **Timely resolution to complex complaints:** Complaints received by the Board have increased over 78% during the last year; yet, under Mr. Cleghorn's leadership the time to resolution has decreased. Removing Mr. Cleghorn puts this progress at unnecessary risk at a time when additional advancements are needed.
- **Loss of familiarity with the intricate relationship between state and federal laws:** Issues presented to GBON impact multiple levels of nursing practice. Retaining the knowledge base Mr. Cleghorn has built over six years is imperative for optimal function of GBON.
- **Recent vacancy of the Nursing Education Consultant position:** At a time when GBON already faces a vacancy in this highly specialized resource position, replacing our Executive Director does not make sense. Finding a new Nursing Education Consultant is essential in maintaining the timely evaluation and monitoring of the 79 nursing education programs currently operating in Georgia.

- **Georgia will lose its voice on the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN):**
As an elected NCSBN Board member, Mr. Cleghorn has built a strong professional network, earned the respect of national nursing leaders, and has access to best practices in nursing regulation. Secretary Kemp's proposed personnel change will require his resignation from this esteemed position.

Secretary Kemp revised his proposed plan on June 29 and July 21, 2016. However, his revised plans all include Mr. Cleghorn's removal as GBON Executive Director. Even more troubling is that all of Secretary Kemp's decisions continue to be made unilaterally, without consultation with GBON. A statement from Secretary Kemp made at the July 21, 2016 stakeholder meeting announced he has decided to revisit his decision stating, "Although the executive director will be reassigned in the future, I think it is best to wait until 2017 to begin the transition process. Under this plan, the transition period will conclude with a new executive director in August 2017." While a delay in the reassignment is an improvement compared to the immediate July 1, 2016 effective date, we do not believe it is an acceptable solution that best serves GBON and the citizens of Georgia.

GBON appreciates the outpouring of support from our licensees and stakeholders. Over 100 stakeholders attended the GBON July 21, 2016 meeting expressing first-hand knowledge of Mr. Cleghorn's expertise in nursing regulation, attention to detail, and customer service involving the four areas of nursing regulation: licensure, practice, discipline, and education. During the meeting stakeholders openly and with clarity identified three priorities for GBON:

- **Request Office of Secretary of State abandon replacement plans** for the GBON current Executive Director, Jim Cleghorn.
- **Request Office of Secretary of State work with GBON to collaborate on designing a cross-training plan** that provides Professional Licensing Boards (PLB) designated personnel the opportunity to implement the plan so personnel are prepared to step in for those unforeseen circumstances when the current Executive Director would no longer be able to serve in that capacity; and
- **Seek an improved GBON organizational structure** in which the Board could function effectively and efficiently to address the dynamic, complex operations in the Board's mission of public protection.

A letter was sent to Secretary Kemp on July 25, 2016 advising him of these stakeholder priorities which GBON has adopted and formally requesting abandonment of replacement plans for GBON current Executive Director, Mr. Cleghorn.

GBON invites you, our stakeholder, to pursue open dialogue with other concerned citizens including your legislators. You may focus on concerns with the replacement of our current exemplary GBON Executive Director, ongoing lack of communication from Secretary of State office with GBON, a request of Secretary of State office to work with GBON to develop an appropriate cross-training plan for designated personnel and the need for an improved GBON organizational structure to achieve regulatory excellence in the dynamic complex system of nursing regulation.

Sincerely,
Georgia Board of Nursing