

**STATE OF VERMONT  
GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD  
Rule 7.000: REMOVAL OF A BOARD MEMBER FOR CAUSE**

**7.100 General Provisions**

- 7.101 Authority
- 7.102 Scope and Purpose
- 7.103 Definitions
- 7.104 Applicability
- 7.105 Confidentiality
- 7.106 Time

**7.200 Basis for Removal**

- 7.201 Cause for Removal
- 7.202 Factors to be Considered

**7.300 Process for Removal**

- 7.301 General Matters
- 7.302 Initial Inquiry
- 7.303 Formal Proceedings
- 7.304 Alternatives to Removal for Cause; Hearing Waiver
- 7.305 Post Hearing Proceedings
- 7.306 Appeals

**7.400 Other Matters**

- 7.401 Severability
- 7.402 Effective Date

**GREEN MOUNTAIN CARE BOARD**  
**RULE 7.000: REMOVAL OF A BOARD MEMBER FOR CAUSE**

**7.100 General Provisions**

**7.101 Authority**

The Green Mountain Care Board adopts this rule pursuant to 18 V.S.A. §§ 9374(b)(4), 9380, and other applicable law.

**7.102 Scope and Purpose**

The Board is charged with reducing the rate of health care cost growth in Vermont while ensuring that the State maintains a high quality, accessible health care system. To that end, Board members must conduct themselves in an independent, fair, and competent manner. The purpose of this rule is to define the basis and process for removal of Board members for cause.

**7.103 Definitions**

- (a) “Board” means the Green Mountain Care Board established under 18 V.S.A. chapter 220.
- (b) “Chair” means the Chair of the Board under 18 V.S.A. § 9374(a)(1), unless he or she is the subject of a complaint alleging conduct constituting cause for removal, in which case the member with the longest tenure shall serve as Chair during the proceedings governed by this rule.
- (c) “Complaint” means any allegation or allegations, whether or not in writing, received by the Chair or legal counsel maintaining that one or more members have engaged in conduct constituting cause for removal.
- (d) “Formal complaint” means a document prepared by legal counsel upon direction of the Chair pursuant to Section 8.303 of this rule, stating the allegations supporting cause for removal of a member and the factual basis thereof.
- (e) “Legal counsel” means the Board’s general counsel or designated associate general counsel or staff attorney.
- (f) “Member” means a member of the Board as described in 18 V.S.A. § 9374(a)(1) and includes the Chair.
- (g) “Participating member” means a member of the Board and the Chair, but does not include a member who is subject of the complaint or is recused, ineligible, or otherwise unable to participate in a proceeding under this rule.
- (h) “Subject member” means a member who is the subject of a complaint.

**7.104 Applicability**

This rule applies to proceedings to remove a member for cause or impose other disciplinary sanction after the effective date of this rule. This rule does not supersede relevant state personnel policies, practices and procedures, or federal or state law.

**7.105 Confidentiality**

Members’ personnel records and employee information provided to the Board under this rule shall be handled in accordance with Vermont law and state personnel policies and are considered

confidential, unless disclosure is otherwise required by law. The Chair and legal counsel shall consult with the Office of the Vermont Attorney General and the Department of Human Resources, as needed, prior to disclosing materials produced or gathered during the proceedings governed by this rule.

#### **7.106 Time**

- (a) In computing any time period, measured in days, that is established or allowed by this rule or by order of the Board or Chair:
  - (1) the day of the act or event that triggers the period shall be excluded;
  - (2) every day, including intermediate Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays shall be counted;
  - (3) the last day of the period shall be counted, but if the last day is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period continues to run until the end of the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday.
- (b) A “legal holiday” means:
  - (1) any day declared a holiday by the President or Congress of the United States; and
  - (2) any day declared a holiday by the State of Vermont.

#### **7.200 Basis for Removal**

##### **7.201 Cause for Removal**

Any of the following may constitute a basis for removal for cause of a member from office:

- (a) Conduct that is prejudicial to the execution of the Board’s statutory mandate, whether or not related to official duties or constituting conduct in office, that
  - (1) brings the Board into disrepute or disrespect, or
  - (2) renders the member unfit to act or to command public confidence;
- (b) The willful or negligent failure to appropriately address and resolve conflicts of interest as provided for in 18 V.S.A. § 9374(c)(1)-(5);
- (c) The refusal, failure, or inability to perform his or her duties at the Board;
- (d) Violations of state or federal law; or
- (e) Violations of Vermont personnel policies and procedures.

##### **7.202 Factors to be Considered**

The participating members shall consider and give appropriate weight to the following factors in determining whether there is cause for removal of a member against whom a complaint has been filed:

- (a) The nature and seriousness of the conduct at issue, including whether such conduct was intentional, technical, or inadvertent, or was committed maliciously, repeatedly, or for personal gain;
- (b) His or her work performance as a member of the Board, including whether the member displays disregard for established procedures and protocols, or engages in disruptive or disrespectful behavior towards colleagues, peers, or members of the public;
- (c) The effect of the conduct upon the member’s ability to perform his or her duties satisfactorily;

- (d) The effect of the conduct upon the Board's ability to perform its duties satisfactorily;
- (e) The notoriety of the conduct at issue or its impact upon the reputation of the Board;
- (f) Any mitigating circumstances surrounding the conduct;
- (g) Any aggravating circumstances surrounding the conduct; and
- (h) Any other factors the Board determines are relevant.

### **7.300 Process for Removal**

#### **7.301 General Matters**

- (a) In determining whether to remove a member for cause, the Board may receive information, investigate, dismiss unfounded complaints, issue written warnings, and conduct hearings.
- (b) The Chair, in consultation with legal counsel and the Department of Human Resources, may, at any time following the receipt of a complaint through the issuance of a decision and order, place the subject member on paid administrative leave if the alleged conduct supports such action.
- (c) The Chair, in consultation with legal counsel and consistent with state and federal law, may take reasonable measures not provided for in this rule to ensure that the process is conducted in a fair and impartial manner.
- (d) Except when the Board determines otherwise for good cause, the Board shall not address a complaint arising out of conduct discovered by the complainant more than three (3) years prior to the date of the complaint.

#### **7.302 Initial Inquiry**

- (a) Within three (3) days of receipt of a complaint alleging specific conduct that may constitute cause for removal, the Chair shall direct legal counsel to immediately commence a confidential, initial inquiry into the member's alleged conduct to determine if the matter should be subject to further investigation.
- (b) Within thirty (30) days of commencing an initial inquiry, legal counsel shall provide to the Chair and participating member with the longest tenure initial written findings and a recommendation whether the Board should conduct further investigation and an administrative hearing.
- (c) If on review the Chair and longest-tenured participating member agree that the allegations are unfounded, or if accepted as true would be insufficient to support a disciplinary action, the matter shall be dismissed and complainant notified in writing of the dismissal within ten (10) days following such determination.
- (d) The deadlines contained in subsections (b) and (c) herein may be extended by no more than thirty (30) days for good cause.
- (e) Notwithstanding the above, the Chair in consultation with legal counsel may refer the complaint to the Department of Human Resources, law enforcement, or other regulatory entity, during which time action on the complaint may be suspended.

#### **7.303 Formal Proceedings**

- (a) If the matter is not dismissed under Section 8.302(c) of this rule, the Chair shall direct legal counsel to notify participating members of the commencement of formal proceedings and to draft a formal complaint and notice of hearing setting the time and place for an administrative hearing. The formal complaint and notice of hearing shall be provided to the subject member within ten (10) days following a determination that the matter warrants further action.
- (b) The hearing shall be held no sooner than twenty (20) days following the subject member's receipt of the formal complaint and notice of hearing.
- (c) The hearing panel shall consist of all participating members.
- (d) The Chair, in consultation with participating members, shall designate outside counsel to serve as hearing officer. The hearing officer may set appropriate limits on prehearing discovery given the nature of the allegations.
- (e) Legal counsel shall present the evidence in support of the formal complaint and has the burden of proving the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. In the event that legal counsel is a witness to the proceeding, the Chair, in consultation with participating members, shall designate outside counsel to present such evidence.
- (f) The subject member shall have the right to appear personally and by attorney to answer the charge, to present evidence in his or her defense, and to examine and cross-examine witnesses.
- (g) The hearing shall conform to the rules of procedure and evidence governing contested cases under the Vermont Administrative Procedure Act.
- (h) The Board shall ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the disciplinary process in accordance with state and federal law.
- (i) The failure of the subject member to appear in person or by attorney, absent good cause, may be treated as a waiver of all defenses and an admission of the alleged conduct.
- (j) A member may be removed for cause only upon a majority vote of the participating members. If a majority of the members do not agree on removal, the participating members may consider alternatives to removal for cause pursuant to Section 8.304 of this rule, which must also be determined by majority vote.

#### **7.304 Alternatives to Removal for Cause; Hearing Waiver**

- (a) In the alternative to removal for cause, participating members may impose lesser sanctions against a subject member where there are mitigating factors, including, but not limited to:
  - (1) The conduct, behavior, or incident on its own was minor;
  - (2) The conduct was inadvertent rather than purposeful;
  - (3) The conduct resulted in no or minimal harm; or
  - (4) The conduct was isolated and is unlikely to recur.
- (b) Lesser sanctions may include, but are not limited to:
  - (1) Oral reprimand;
  - (2) Written reprimand; or
  - (3) Suspension without pay.
- (c) A disciplinary proceeding against a member may be resolved without formal hearing by agreed settlement, consent order, or upon the member's failure to appear to contest the allegations as set forth in Section 8.303(i) of this rule.

- (d) Any disciplinary action taken against a member shall be consistent with applicable state personnel policies and procedures.

### **7.305 Post-Hearing Proceedings**

- (a) The Board shall issue a written decision containing specific findings of fact and conclusions of law and an order within thirty (30) days of completion of the administrative hearing or a determination to waive the hearing under Section 8.304(c) of this rule, and immediately deliver a copy to the subject member.
- (b) A copy of the written decision and order shall be provided to the Green Mountain Care Board Nominating Committee and the Governor's Office. In cases of removal or imposed discipline, a copy of the written decision and order shall be provided to the Department of Human Resources.
- (c) The complainant shall be notified whether allegations were substantiated and, if applicable, that appropriate disciplinary action has been taken.

### **7.306 Appeals**

- (a) The Board's decision and order issued pursuant to Section 8.305 of this rule shall be considered a final action of the Board and may be appealed to the Supreme Court in accordance with 18 V.S.A. § 9381.
- (b) The order shall not be stayed pending appeal.

### **7.400 Other Matters**

#### **7.401 Severability**

If any provision of this rule or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is for any reason held to be invalid, the remaining provisions of the rule and the application of such provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

#### **7.402 Effective Date**

This rule shall become effective [insert date].