



Board of Barbers and Hairdressers

Hair Styling/Braiding Work Group and Town Hall Meeting
Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
December 13, 2023, at 6:00 PM AKST via Zoom

Work Group Members Present: Michelle McMullin, Tenaya Miramontes

Staff Present: Renee Carabaja, Program Coordinator

Call to Order

Chair McMullin opened the meeting at 6:00 PM and explained the purpose of the Town Hall and generally how the board operates. She explained that the board was aware of the need to allow barbers to braid hair, which was accidentally taken out of statute in 2017. The board had also issued a statement on its web site regarding instruction of hair braiding and was working on regulations to change this. The board had also heard a statutory proposal from Ms. Miramontes regarding hair styling.

The chair opened the floor to the public:

A public person requested Ms. Miramontes explain what the hair styling statute change would do. The speaker was concerned that the proposal would negatively impact the hair braiding license. Ms. Miramontes said the purpose is to encourage young people to become interested in the profession. Teaching them to use hot tools is a way to start them out at first. She didn't see that this conflicted with braiding. The public person said that King Career Center offered training for most professions under this board. She said that adding limited styling to the braiding license didn't make sense. Ms. Miramontes said the board hadn't worked through the number of hours it might require learning how to use a blow dryer, curling iron, etc. Chair McMullin said that some states required a lot more hours than Alaska currently requires for hair braiders, so the board needed to be careful not to impact hair braiders. Chair McMullin said she envisioned this training being most successful as an apprenticeship, especially since schools are not available in all major areas of the state.

A public person wondered what license is required to apply hair extensions. Chair McMullin stated a hairdresser license was required because of the need to understand porosity, coloring, etc.

A public person stated she was a school owner. One of her students quit after six days because sectioning hair was too difficult. She thought hair braiding was an art and pretty difficult. She wondered why hair braiding wasn't part of the non-chemical barber license. They can use hot tools. There was a discussion about schools. Chair McMullin said that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) required ducting at nail salons and schools. The public person said that 12-hour nail courses were not "hands-on" but were all safety and sanitation. Another public person said that all courses should require safety and sanitation education, as well as diseases and disorders. One speaker said that braiding too tight is the biggest problem with that procedure, causing sores on the scalp.

The instructor speaking said that people don't concentrate when someone else is paying for their education. Students quit once they learn the one thing, they want to learn instead of seeing it through the entire program.

Someone asked how Anchorage instructors could help students in other areas, like Juneau, could help. Chair McMullin said that apprenticeship is an option. Ms. Miramontes said that there is currently no school in Juneau.

She said she knows many people who are working without a license in Juneau because there is no school and no ability for people to properly train. The speaker raised concerns about the risk to public safety. The chair said that people think they can watch YouTube and TikTok and understand all of the considerations necessary to safely do hair and nails. If people want a legal career, they need to put in the work. The chair said there was a lot of dangerous material online. A public person said she had seen people teach that using hand sanitizer on a spoolie as okay. Or washing and reusing sponges. Or using cheese graters. Or buying needles for permanent brows on Amazon and getting dirty needles. This is not okay.

A public person asked how the hair styling license would benefit people in Juneau if there is no school. Ms. Miramontes said that hairdressers could see more clients at the same time if someone else could finish the style. People are waiting two months for an appointment. Someone with a hair styling license could specialize in blow-dry bars, especially to help people who are disabled or elderly and need to have their hair washed weekly.

The instructor said she is extremely stressed out completing the Commission on Postsecondary Education's (ACPE) paperwork. Another speaker advised the board to be careful about requirements so schools are not required; apprenticeship should be an option.

The chair said the board is currently complaint-driven because they are waiting for DEC to allow them to inspect hair and nail salons because DEC is not doing it. People who have shop owners' licenses, other than tattoo and permanent cosmetic coloring, can do whatever they want. The only unlicensed person who can touch hair is the shampoo person. They can shampoo and rinse but can't do anything else.

A public person mentioned the exemptions from licensure for rural areas. Someone mentioned the possibility of opening a temporary school where permanent schools don't exist. The chair said something like this had been done when corporate representatives came to instruct on their products in hotel conference rooms.

Ms. Miramontes said she had looked at the non-chemical barber requirements and expected the hair styling license might require 220 hours, which she hoped could be established in regulations. Chair McMullin said definitions would always stay in statute but agreed that putting hours in regulations would be better. A public person said that if more than 100 hours is required, that program must be accredited with ACPE, which is an incredibly difficult process. The chair suggested a 400-hour program to apply makeup and style hair for events. The chair said she does nails and makeup at weddings outside of a shop. A public person said she thought that should be available to all licensees, not just the board chair.

The chair said that protecting the public must be the board's top priority, but they should be flexible to meet Alaska's unique needs. The chair said that the legislature needs to allow the board to adopt these in regulation so the board can be more flexible.

There was a discussion about the proposed hair styling legislation, including concerns that a hair stylist may believe they can do more than what is allowed, confusing it with a hairdresser license.

Ms. Miramontes said she needed to leave the meeting. The chair asked Ms. Miramontes if she could research requirements in other states, to which she agreed. The chair said she would like licenses to be transferable.

The group discussed whether makeup companies and department stores should be allowed to put makeup on people without the appropriate license.

The discussion included latex prosthetics and allergies, skin conditions, sanitation, and other health concerns. Women won't report—or don't know who to report to—if their skin is damaged during a service, whether by a licensed or unlicensed individual. So, there is an even deeper stigma preventing problems from being corrected.

The group discussed how this is an important trade that needs to be supported. Students need to understand that this is work and requires commitment.

Attendees said they appreciated the opportunity to discuss these topics with members of the board.

The work group did not take any further action on any items during this session.

The work group adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved on the record during August 8, 2024 Board Meeting.