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In this issue:

**Part III and Part IV
Evolution**

**Examination Security –
A Matter of Integrity**

CCAT

**Ad Hoc Committee on
Funding for the FCLB**

President's Letter

**National Board
of Chiropractic Examiners**

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Dear Colleague,

The annual meetings of the NBCE and the FCLB in St. Louis remind me of how proud I am of the work of the individual state boards, staff and board members of each organization and how much I appreciate their efforts in moving this profession forward. A half year has passed and so I want to bring you up to date on just a few of our activities at the NBCE.

When I think about how quickly the year is going by, I realize how rapidly things change, especially in technology that allows us to advance in the knowledge and scope of what we do. In testing the NBCE is investigating the benefits of rapidly changing methods of measuring clinical competency to better assess a doctor's readiness to practice.

Part III and Part IV Evolution

Responding to new technology and processes for measurement provides a great opportunity to update the Part III exam. New formats will allow the exam to be more discriminatory in assessing a student's ability to make clinical decisions.

The September district director's newsletter announced the pilot study for a new format for Part III. On September 22, the NBCE hosted a test committee to select questions for the "new" Part III pilot examination. This exam will consist of questions in a new format called extended matching. Extended matching questions are more extensive and require the application of critical thinking skills to diagnose and recommend treatment. Each question of this type presents a case with relevant case history and background information along with diagnostics such as X-rays. The answers will consist of multiple responses based upon the presenting history and will require the ability to apply clinical skills to the appropriate answers.

Test committee members included practicing state board representatives from all five districts and chiropractic college faculty. It is important to say that these test committee members were chosen by NBCE staff for their demonstrated expertise and practice skills as experienced doctors of chiropractic.

The Part III pilot exam project is expected to take between two to three years for development and testing. It will first be pilot tested at chiropractic colleges throughout the United States and then scored and statistically analyzed. NBCE Director Dr. Richard Cole co-chair of the Part III & IV Committee (the other co-chair is NBCE Director Dr. Oliver Smith, Jr.) told the committee that if the Part III pilot proves to present a fair and relevant exam, the format will then be demonstrated to faculty and students at chiropractic colleges before implementation. The new format will then replace the existing Part III test method. The entire NBCE Board and staff are very excited about updating our exams and maintaining the highest standard in testing and assessment.



Part III Pilot Test Committee, September 22, 2007

Part IV

Just recently Dr. Clarence Kreiter, an expert in the field of education and a professor at the Medical Graduate Schools of the University of Iowa, stated that upon analysis of the psychometric characteristics of the May 2007 exam the NBCE's present pass/fail decisions are highly reliable and may rank among the **best** in the industry. Needless to say we are proud of that assessment and the work of Part IV Director Dr. Paul Townsend. Yet Dr. Townsend and his staff are always engaged in looking at ways to improve Part IV. In short, we want to do an even better job evaluating the clinical skills of licensure candidates.

I am both excited and motivated by the improvements that we are pursuing in both Parts III and IV, which represent the National Board's dedication to public safety through the thorough and relevant assessment of a doctor's critical thinking and clinical skills.

Examination Security – A Matter of Integrity

There is a quiet epidemic in the United States. A small but growing number of exam candidates are willingly circumventing established testing processes so that they can disseminate exam content. While cheating has always been a problem, computerization of exams and the overabundance of electronic instruments make it easier than ever. The NBCE's response to this epidemic is going to be swift and certain. At the NBCE, we have zero tolerance for cheating.

The consequences of cheating on NBCE exams range from invalidating the examinees' test results to barring them from taking all future NBCE examinations. This would severely restrict the examinees' ability to acquire their licenses to practice. Moreover, exam review companies and anyone who conspires with them to steal NBCE's copyrighted exams will be prosecuted to the fullest extent.

There are two main reasons for our zero-tolerance policy. The first is to protect the vast majority of students' exam results and to ensure state licensing boards and the public that the National Board provides a valid, legally defensible and fair exam. This would not be possible if some students were allowed to cheat. Additionally, NBCE item pools are a copyrighted and a tangible asset for the NBCE.

Let me give you an example of what could go wrong. Just this year in Georgia, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy found it necessary to delay their exams by several months when they discovered a University of Georgia pharmacy professor had shared exam questions with students in review sessions. In November 2007, the pharmacy board will be able to finally assure validity of their items and administer an exam, but until then no pharmacist in the country will be certified.

This incident is just one example of a security breach that the NBCE and the students of chiropractic cannot afford. From item development by test committees, to printing of exams, to delivery to test administrators, to administration of exams to students, to scanning answer sheets and scoring, every aspect of the exam delivery process of the NBCE is being reviewed. Now, we're telling the profession and warning the students and review companies through communiqués to chiropractic colleges that security is one of our number one concerns.

CCAT

The Chiropractic College Assessment Test was launched online on October 1, 2007. CCAT is an optional tool to assess the skills of prospective students; it will be an invaluable tool to make information available to counselors about the requirements necessary to enter chiropractic college. CCAT will help both counselors and students understand the science and critical thinking abilities needed to successfully complete a degree in chiropractic. It may also be utilized by chiropractic colleges to identify problem areas in a student's learning abilities that can be addressed early to ensure this student a more productive educational experience. CCAT will be available via the Internet in a specialized testing facility such as a college computer lab. After scoring, prospective students can elect to send their scores to their choice of chiropractic colleges.

Ad Hoc Committee on Funding for the FCLB

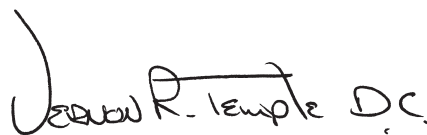
The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Funding for the FCLB occurred during the last weekend of September. Committee members include:

- Chair, NBCE Director Dr. Richard Cole
- NBCE Vice President Dr. N. Edwin Weathersby
- District II Director Dr. Donna Craft
- District I Director Dr. Robin Lecy
- NBCE Delegate Representative Dr. Marc Gammerman.

For many years the relationship between the NBCE and the FCLB has been united by our mutual desire to serve state licensing boards—the National Board by providing adequate testing of pre- and post-licensure competency and the FCLB by addressing the regulatory concerns of state boards.

This September meeting was the first step in identifying possible solutions to address the permanent funding of the FCLB that will enable them to meet the requirements for their services in regulation and still enable the NBCE to continue meeting the requirements for their services in testing. This is a critical partnership toward public health safety and we are proud to be a key player. We can look forward to an interim report soon.

As the fall colors arrive I am reminded of how much we've accomplished this year. I want to let you know that the NBCE Board and staff continue to work hard throughout the year to ensure the very best in chiropractic examinations. I thank them for their dedication and commitment throughout the year. Additionally, I thank all in this great profession of chiropractic for all that you do throughout the year to serve as state board members, test committee members, and examinees. We look forward to the coming year and wish you the best through the upcoming holiday season.



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NBCE President

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