

NBCE Introduces Computerized SPEC

Editorial Staff

GREELEY, CO - When former congressional nominee Dr. Peter Ferguson became president of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) in May 2000, he committed to improve communications with the profession; expand the NBCE's role in international testing; emphasize sound fiscal policies; and explore the possibility of computerizing written exams.

At the fall meeting of the NBCE Board of Directors, the computerization committee (co-chaired by Secretary Vernon Temple,DC, and Treasurer Jerry Blanchard,DC) collaborated with the Special Purposes Examination for Chiropractic (SPEC) committee (chaired by Director Wayne Wolfson,DC) to announce plans to introduce a computerized SPEC. The NBCE has administered the SPEC twice a year since 1993 to almost 400 examinees, with most tests being used for the purpose of licensure reciprocity. The NBCE felt that for this test to be of greater value, more frequent and convenient testing dates were necessary. Previously offered two to three times each year, the computerized SPEC will be given on a bimonthly basis on the third Thursday of the month at more than 300 Prometric Testing Centers throughout the United States, beginning in February 2002.

The SPEC is specifically designed for use by state or foreign licensing agencies in cases of:

- disciplinary action - allowing a licensing agency to certify a chiropractor's clinical competency;
- reciprocity/endorsement - allowing a chiropractor to move to another state when that state accepts SPEC for licensure purposes; and
- reinstatement following licensure lapse, suspension or revocation.

The examination assesses DCs who have been licensed and have practiced for at least two years. The candidate must provide a written request or requirement from a state licensing agency to take the SPEC. The SPEC is a four-hour test that contains 200 multiple-choice questions. Successful completion of the exam certifies that the doctor has demonstrated the appropriate clinical understanding and judgment required in unsupervised chiropractic practice. General information and applications on the SPEC can be downloaded from the NBCE website (www.nbce.org). For more information, contact Joanne Monath, NBCE director of professional relations and communications, at 970-356-9100, extension 119.

NBCE's Six-Month Check-Up

At the fall meeting of the NBCE, the directors assessed the progress achieved since the annual meeting in San Antonio last April.

Shortly after the September 11 tragedy, the NBCE administered its national written exams as

scheduled for September 14-16, 2001. The decision to hold the exams as scheduled was the concern that cancellation would hurt students who were required to be examined, had prepared, and were ready to enter practice. The NBCE staff fielded more than 1,300 calls the first three days after the terrorist attacks, and attempted to accommodate all the examinees. Pamela Kurtz, NBCE director of administration, reported that no-shows increased by only 0.6 percent in September 2001 compared to the previous testing.

Budgetary Issues

With the increase in exam fees approved earlier this year, the NBCE finance committee, headed by NBCE treasurer and District I Director Jerry Blanchard, DC, believes it will be able to minimize the financial impact of increased exam administration costs and declining student enrollments in chiropractic colleges.

Earlier this year in a move to control Part IV exam administration costs, the NBCE closed the Palmer West test site. At the fall meeting, the board voted to close the New York Chiropractic College Levittown Health Clinic, and Cleveland Chiropractic College-Kansas City test sites for the May 2002 Part IV exam. The remaining 14 sites will provide testing capacity for approximately 2,100 Part IV candidates.

International Affairs

With increased opportunities to collaborate with foreign governments on the assessment of chiropractic education and clinical competency, Dr. Ferguson appointed NBCE Director-At-Large D. Brent Owens, DC, as chairman of an ad hoc Committee on International Testing. Dr. Owens expressed concern that the National Board remain in the role of facilitator and collaborator to aid foreign countries with chiropractic testing issues.

The NBCE directors will convene a seminar at the Greeley, Colorado headquarters for representatives of colleges active in international chiropractic education. The seminar will focus on how the National Board can support and encourage collaboration in establishing appropriate guidelines, practice parameters, and acceptable educational levels without breaching the self-determination and diversity of each country.

JANUARY 2002