

Now It's up to the National Board Delegates

Donald M. Petersen Jr., BS, HCD(hc), FICC(h), Publisher

While *Dynamic Chiropractic* began the dialogue,¹ virtually every chiropractic organization has felt compelled to take a position on the current situation regarding the directors of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE):

ICA Calls for Immediate and Profound Reform - "ICA estimates that the National Board has added over \$50 million to the student debt burden over the past 12 to 14 years.

"We each have a personal stake in this matter because at present, the National Board, which was elected by no one, neither chartered nor accredited by any national government agency or recognized body, and, it appears, responsible to no one, is just not doing the job the profession needs or wants at this time. "ICA will lead the way in demanding fairness and responsibility from the National Board, or, lead the way to the establishment of an alternative."²

ACA Expresses Concerns - "The ACA believes a review of the following areas of concern could benefit the NBCE, the chiropractic profession as a whole, and most importantly, chiropractic students:³

1. delegate authority to amend the bylaws
2. term limits
3. delegate committees
4. liaisons with chiropractic organizations
5. travel and entertainment expenses
6. electronic testing for parts I, II and III
7. reducing the cost of examinations."

FCLB Calls for Review of Organization - "Let's make one thing very clear. Testing is not the issue. The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners meets important criteria for licensure in those states that have accepted the exams in lieu of individual state testing.

"Legitimate issues and concerns have been raised regarding the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners, the board's structure, the bylaws and the policies. Our representatives to the NBCE have stated in a letter to all U.S. licensing board members that they welcome these issues being raised and are committed to working for needed changes.

"We believe that a review of the organization, although sometimes initially painful, is a critical first step in addressing concerns. Accountability of the NBCE Board of Directors to the licensing agencies, which accept their tests, is paramount."⁴

Student ACA Voices Opinion - "Although NBCE feels that it operates financially within legal limits to retain not-for-profit status, excessive revenues and expenditures warrant further evaluation of testing fees. With the rising cost of tuition and a heavy undergraduate debt, chiropractic students are now more financially burdened than ever. In terms of mandatory testing, operational and

institutional advancement costs for NBCE are justifiable. Excessive traveling expenses and expensive dinners are not. After all, it is the students' loan dollars that fund your overhead, business meetings, and staff expenses. In light of this, we ask that the NBCE reconsider their priorities. Are they to advance and ensure the continuance of a well-educated, qualified profession, or to pamper board members on 'business' meetings?"⁵

Student ICA Requests Reforms - "As we enter the 21st century, technology has never been more readily available or easier to use. Most postgraduate professions have been testing their students using computer-based technology for years. Computer-based objective testing is a simple and very cost-effective way to test students. Not only would computer testing significantly reduce the cost of testing students, but also it would significantly increase the rate at which students get their results back. In addition, computer testing would increase the number of tests available to students each year, accounting for the various schedules of chiropractic colleges, and giving more flexibility to the students."⁵

Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) Request Consolidation of NBCE Parts II and III - During their session with representatives from the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE), the chiropractic college presidents' discussion of educational issues resulted in several specific recommendations. ACC expressed the need for substantial change to include:

1. consolidation of NBCE Parts II and III;
2. improved scheduling of examinations; and
3. electronic testing. (Please see "College Presidents Call for 'Consolidation of NBCE Parts II and III'," in the April 17, 2000 issue of *DC*.)

When asked about many of these issues, NBCE Treasurer John Tierney, DC refused to be interviewed (please see "NBCE: More Questions," also in the April 17 issue). Dr. Tierney's refusal said more about the lack of communication between the National Board directors and their delegates than he might have said in an interview.

Every communication to *Dynamic Chiropractic* from doctors and students, save one, has echoed the frustration and desire for "profound" change for the National Board. Most organizations and DCs feel the National Board tests are not at issue, but that the financial management of the NBCE deserves much greater scrutiny and accountability.

One issue that hasn't been raised yet is:

Why has every National Board director for at least the past 20 years been a white male? Even the National Board's own current and revised bylaws use the term "his" when referring to the NBCE president, treasurer, district directors and those eligible to become directors, even though many delegates protested this language at the last delegates' meeting. Aren't any of the women and people of other ethnic backgrounds on the state licensing boards qualified to become National Board directors?

With an almost unanimous mandate from all concerned chiropractic organizations and the students and doctors of the chiropractic profession, the National Board delegates are well supported to demand change within their own organization. Unfortunately, the National Board directors have already demonstrated little regard for their delegates or parliamentary procedure. At the last annual meeting, a recommendation to extend the terms of the board of directors was soundly defeated, and a new resolution was passed:

"To have the five district directors review the bylaws and report to the delegates at next year's

annual meeting."

This motion passed with little dissension. It was stipulated that the report of the review committee be mailed to all delegates no later than Jan. 1, 2000, to "give the delegates the ability to evaluate the proposed changes."⁶ Contrary to this motion, the five NBCE district directors held their recommendations for changes to the bylaws until 45 days before the annual meeting, effectively eliminating any opportunity for input by the delegates.

As the annual meeting approaches, the directors of the NBCE are becoming even more domineering. In preparation for the meeting, Kansas delegate James Edwards,DC, requested additional information on the bylaws and the financial expenditures of the NBCE Directors. In a letter dated March 24, 2000, the NBCE denied his request, stating :

"However, it would be inappropriate and impractical to provide information in response to specific requests by individual delegates in advance of the meeting.

"As to your request for additional financial information, the Board will, as is its practice, make its auditors report available to the Delegates at the annual meeting."

Apparently, the NBCE directors have received additional requests from other delegates. If the delegates are ever going to take back control of the National Board, they must do so by demanding three things:

1. They must receive copies of all meeting minutes held by the National Board directors (two five-day, full-board meetings per year) and National Board executive committee (three three-day, six-director meetings per year). The delegates are not invited to these meetings and must know what is going on.
2. They must have the ability to modify and propose amendments to the NBCE bylaws and all other resolutions brought forward by the directors prior to voting on them.
3. There should be new district directors who are sensitive to the concerns of the chiropractic profession and will bring meaningful change.

As has been the case every year for the last 10, I will be present at the meeting of the National Board directors and delegates on May 5. This will give me the opportunity to see exactly what the directors and delegates do, then report on what happens in our May 29 issue. If you would like to see change within the National Board, the best thing you can do is contact your state licensing board (for contact information, go to [url=http://www.fclb.org]http://www.fclb.org[/url]). Ask your National Board representative to demand greater control of the NBCE and vote for new directors who will also work for change.

References

1. NBCE: Violating a professional trust or doing business as usual? *Dynamic Chiropractic*, January 25, 2000. <http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/18/03/13.html>
2. ICA Board calls for "immediate, profound reforms" of the NBCE. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, February 7, 2000. <http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/18/04/09.html>
3. ACA weighs in on Nat'l Board debate. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, February 21, 2000. <http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/18/05/12.html>

4. What does the FCLB have to do with the NBCE? *Dynamic Chiropractic*, March 20, 2000
<http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/18/07/16.html>
5. Chiropractic students weigh in on NBCE controversy. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, April 3, 2000.
<http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/18/08/19.html>
6. Nat'l Board delegates seek greater authority. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, May 31, 1999.
<http://www.ChiroWeb.com/archives/17/12/20.html>

APRIL 2000