



NEWS / PROFESSION

Long-Awaited Changes to the "New" NBCE

PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

Editorial Staff

For the first time in its 44-year history, the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) will allow its delegates to review and vote on proposed bylaws amendments one section at a time. In the past, previous NBCE leaders have presented an "all or nothing" proposal that essentially forced NBCE delegates to accept amendments they didn't want along with those they had requested. This created situations wherein the delegates had to vote down an amendment containing bylaw changes they were seeking because it was packaged with changes they found unconscionable.



In the following exclusive interview, NBCE President Vernon Temple, DC, discusses the issues that the delegates have tried to address for several years, and how the new NBCE leadership is now responding.

Dynamic Chiropractic (DC): Dr. Temple, there have been a number of proposals in the past for changes to the bylaws. Can you speak to us about what the current proposed bylaw changes are and how they will impact the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners?

Vernon Temple (VT): Well, I think when we talk about bylaws changes, [I can say that] we've done a number of things. One, we've listened to the concerns of the state delegates and the stakeholders in testing and in this organization. We've very seriously looked at the bylaws this year, and we're making several proposals.

There's always a balance when you look at bylaws. You need to balance the stability of the organization and good governance structure. The bylaws are the basis by which we run this organization, and we want to make sure that it is healthy, but that it also ensures stability for the organization. We looked at proposals that would allow for some flexibility and greater input by the delegates, [and] that still ensured the stability of this organization.

There are a number of proposals that we're going to make. Some of them are simply housekeeping issues and some of them will be significant changes from what we have done in the past. One of the significant changes that we will do this year isn't in the bylaws, but in how we will approach the bylaws and the ratification process. As you know, the bylaws are recommended to the board of directors by the bylaws committee. Those suggestions that go to the bylaws committee come from the delegates, other board members, and the board directly, or from the specific district director. They are then brought to the board of directors and voted on. When they are passed by the board of directors by a vote of a super majority, they are then brought to the delegates for ratification.

In the past, that ratification process has always been an all-or-nothing proposal, in that you only got to vote on all of the changes as a group. This year, we will bring those proposed changes up for a vote for ratification individually or in relevant groups. Relevant groups are areas that have bylaws changes that are interrelated and must pass as a unit ... we've kept these down to 15 proposals that will be voted on.

Proposal #10 is on the subject of what we have heard the most about in the past several years, and it really has to do with term limits for directors. This is a proposal that will have a number of issues that will come together, [including] term limits and director eligibility. The discussion was generated around the fact that most states now have term limits for their licensing boards, and one of the eligibility requirements to be elected as a district director is to be on your state licensing board or have been on your state licensing board within a three-year period.

The feeling was that quite often, if they have term limits on their state licensing board, they're probably just about termed out by the time they've gotten on the board, become associated with the national board, coming to the meetings and have the experience to come on the board as a director. Their availability or eligibility runs out because they get off their state licensing board.

That eligibility issue now becomes a part of the term-limit issue, and the term limits that are going to be recommended are that there be a nine-year term limit for all directors and that there be an aggregate limit of 12 years for a director who may serve in a number of different positions. An example of that would be a district director who served nine years as a district director and then came on as an at-large director and brought their experience to that position. They would only be

able to have an aggregate total limit of 12 years on the board, and after that, they would no longer be eligible at all. So, that [allows] for some crossover to maintain some experience, when necessary. It would set term limits across the board for all directors at nine years for one position and a 12-year aggregate.

I think if you look at all of those proposed changes, overall I expect the delegate body will accept them favorably. Do they address everything that anyone has brought to the board and asked to be changed? No. But I believe it is a fair balance of concerns and a very fair response to those concerns, and it addresses both the response of the delegates and that balance of the integrity and the stability of the organization.

DC: Are there any additional changes the delegates can expect to see when they attend this year's annual meeting?

VT: One of the things that the delegates will see to a greater extent this year at the annual meeting is the goal of financial transparency that the board has directed. We will have a breakout session where the delegates are going to be welcomed to review not only the financial report, but [also] the actual expenditures for the year. Any delegate can review that information, and we will be available to answer all questions. In the past, there have been questions about director travel. We have produced a chart that will show all of the directors, all of the meetings we attend, and which directors go to which meetings, so there will be clarity in the financial reimbursement to directors and their travel, and how much each director is being paid for the responsibilities that they take on for the national board.

This board has worked very hard at taking a good look at our board structure and our governance structure. As you know, over the past four or five years, there is a new responsibility that all boards have. This is not just the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners; all boards have had to look at themselves critically and re-evaluate their governance structure. That comes with what I have referred to this past year as goals toward transparency and accessibility, and best practice for good governance for the organization.

We consulted with two of the finest nonprofit attorneys in the United States, and they counseled us on how to re-evaluate our governance structure. We've done that, and we understand the need to be more transparent, especially to our delegates, who are really our advisory group, if you will, to bring to us their concerns.

You'll hear a lot at the annual meeting about best practice in governance and how the board is addressing that. I've been really proud of this board and how they have taken on that responsibility to take a critical look and self-evaluate as to how we can better serve not only the delegates, but the state licensing boards and, ultimately, the young doctors of chiropractic who are coming up now and having to go through testing to be successfully licensed and practicing.

DC: Is there anything else you would like to share with the profession regarding the national board?

VT: Well, only that the national board takes its role very seriously. I've always been proud that the national board sets the gold standard in testing. Having the pleasure and the honor of being president of the national board for this past year, I continually learn about what an important role the national board plays in the chiropractic profession. We are just one part of this profession, but the integrity of testing will always be reflective of the integrity of the profession itself. My message would be that we take testing very seriously. We have a product that is, I think, pristine. It meets all of the requirements of the state licensing boards, and we recognize that as long as we can be a

reflection of what licensing boards need, then we will take the responsibility of testing very seriously. The changes in bylaws and governance do not change the gold standard that we have set in testing. We will continue in that vein.

DC: Thank you.

Editor's note: While Dr. Temple discussed all 15 proposed amendments during his interview with *DC*, proposals 1-9 and 11-15 are generally housekeeping issues. Thus, only proposed amendment #10 is addressed here. All 15 proposed amendments can be reviewed online at www.nbce.org/news/news_meet.html#bylaws.

APRIL 2007