

## Say Goodbye to the Wisconsin State Exam?

*WCA DOES AN ABOUT-FACE.*

Peter W. Crownfield

Imagine spending more than \$1,400 to take - and more likely than not, fail - Wisconsin's state practical exam, and then finding out the test probably won't even be required in a few months. Such is the frustration being experienced by the overwhelming majority of prospective licensees who took the test in 2012 and at its most recent administration, April 18-19, 2013. The path to exam elimination seemingly has been cleared now that the [Wisconsin Chiropractic Association](#) (WCA), which until recently "has always supported a Wisconsin State Licensure Exam" and "never endorsed the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) Part IV requirement" is supporting legislative efforts to eliminate the exam.

"After a recent taking of the exam by more than 30 students has resulted in continuing concerns about the exam content, the WCA board has concluded that the most prudent course of action is for the state legislature to eliminate the state exam requirement and instead set minimum passing score requirements for Parts III-IV of the national exam."

According to the association, a budget motion approved by the Joint Committee on Finance in early May - and due to go into effect in July 2013, barring complications - achieves this goal by eliminating the exam while establishing "minimum passage requirements for Parts III-IV based on standards established in other states which WCA believes represent the minimum clinical competency that should be demonstrated prior to licensure."

"Motion #91 specifies that 'any applicant for licensure must receive a minimum score of 438 on the [NBCE] Part III examination ... and a minimum score of 475 on the [NBCE] Part IV examination.'"

The national board requires a minimum score of 375 for Parts III and IV. Currently, only two states (West Virginia and North Carolina) require scores above 375 for Part IV (475, the same minimum score proposed in Wisconsin). According to the NBCE, "For Part III, the 375 scaled score represents the appropriately set percent score of 70.5% raw score, while for Part IV, the 375 scaled score represents a 75% overall raw score. The state of Maryland is one state that requires a 438 scaled score on Part III."

In explaining its decision to endorse discontinuation of the state exam after a decade of supporting its use, the WCA said it "has long advocated to establish and maintain quality educational, clinical and professional standards associated with the practice of chiropractic in Wisconsin. That advocacy has included efforts to require applicants for a chiropractic license to demonstrate a level of clinical competency required for the safe and effective practice of chiropractic in this state. The exam was originally developed to ensure the high standards that patients in the state of Wisconsin have come to expect, and the WCA Board and staff have been evaluating the new state exam since it was first implemented."

When asked whether the WCA will now encourage the Wisconsin Chiropractic Examining Board to pass everyone who took the April 18-19 exam and refund their exam fee in full, the WCA noted only that the motion "says the new licensure requirements 'first apply to applications for a license to

practice as a chiropractor that the board receives on the effective date of the bill.' The state budget is scheduled for final passage and signature by the governor in July 2013. In order to be eligible for licensure once the new law goes into effect, applicants would have to fulfill the current requirements by the law."

The Chiropractic Society of Wisconsin, which has fought for elimination of the state exam from the outset, also commented on passage of the motion: "The CSW has put in a year of work to remove this examination. We worked closely with and fully endorsed the recent motions offered to amend the budget through the Joint Finance Committee by Representative Kooyenga in the Assembly and Senator Jerry Petrowski in the Senate that will totally remove the chiropractic examination requirement."

"We do have one final effort yet to undertake with this issue. While the exam will hopefully be history, the WCA demanded inclusion of language in the budget amendment that dramatically increased the required NBCE scores on Part IV and even Part III. They again based this new restriction on 'protecting the public.' The CSW opposed the language. The current NBCE scores are professionally monitored by PhDs in psychometrics.

"The CSW believes that changing the goal posts once again on the current students who already had to suffer through the flawed examination would be extremely unfair. The CSW membership will be working to allow all students who apply for a license prior to the governor's signature on the budget to be allowed to use the current and proper NBCE [minimum] scores that have been accepted for the past decade as acceptable scores."

While the WCA and CSW were quick to provide information regarding the motion and what is now joint support for elimination of the state practical examination, the Wisconsin Chiropractic Examining Board has remained eerily silent, with limited response to our original questions ([see our June 1 article](#)) and no response whatsoever to additional questions posed following passage of the budget motion. However, any response from the board may prove redundant at this point, considering that four of the five members of the current board - including all four chiropractic members - are members of the WCA.

JUNE 2013