

NMTCB REPORT

**Mark H. Crosthwaite, CNMT
Chair**

From a historical standpoint, the NMTCB reached another milestone with the administration of the September 1995 exam, the last exam given in pencil and paper format. Starting in June 1996, computer adaptive testing (CAT) will be the format of the NMTCB exam. During 1995, the NMTCB has written news articles and held lectures on the advantages of the CAT format. There are still details which the board must decide upon at the November board meeting. These include exactly how many questions will be on the exam, cost to take the exam, how to determine pass/fail rates, and when and how often candidates can retake the exam should they fail. Be sure to read the fall NMTCB newsletter, which will cover news of the November board meeting, and look for an informational sheet that will be sent to you. Should you have questions, please contact the NMTCB office.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit one of the CAT testing sites as a mock candidate. The process for the eligible technologist is to initially call the testing center to make an appointment. At the scheduled time, the candidate arrives and registers at the front desk. Exam personnel then assist the candidate with any aspect of the computer's tutorial which is not understood. The exam is in Windows format and questions can be answered by using a keyboard, mouse or touch-sensitive monitor screen. I was impressed with both the exam site and CAT presentation, as well as the ease of taking the exam. This is a truly innovative way for a candidate to take a certification exam.

Sometime after the first of the year, the NMTCB will make available a demo disk that will be in the CAT format. This will familiarize candidates and program directors with the CAT model as well as provide a mock exam that has specific NMTCB exam questions.

The board will also be seating some new members in January 1996; decisions will be made at the November board meeting. Members who will be leaving the board are Karen Blondeau, John Findely, Shirley Ledbetter and Martha Pickett. Each one of these individuals has given extraordinary service to the NMTCB, and I would like to thank them for their hard work and service. At the

same time, the NMTCB has had an overwhelming response by Technologist Section members for candidates to fill our open board positions.

Upon reflection, I have seen a lot of changes in my nine-year tenure on the board. The NMTCB began back in the seventies with the premise, "certification of nuclear medicine technologists by nuclear medicine technologists." During the last 20 years the board has initiated a criterion-referenced exam, changing the standards by which we base a passing score on a competency-based format. We now have more than 16,500 certificants who are CNMTs. This is many more than the number of any other certification organization. With the advent of CAT we will continue to lead in the certification process. As nuclear medicine technologists, we have a lot to be proud of when we look at where we have been and how far we have gone.

What we must not do is rest on our laurels, but be aware of the ever-challenging issues of health care reform. Establishing the concept of multicompetency seems to be the wave of the future and we must adapt to those changes as they become grounded in the health care professions. The NMTCB has been working with the JRC and the Technologist Section to identify additional tasks that a nuclear medicine technologist can perform in the workplace. Nuclear medicine technologists must expand their role to include other aspects of health care, which could include phlebotomy, cardiology, patient assessment and advanced patient care techniques. However, the central focus of our competency is isotopic/functional imaging. As we evolve and acclimate to the changes in health care, we must remember that we have our own expertise. This unique imaging modality is the basis of our competency and our expanding job roles will ensure our professional growth.

I encourage *JNMT* readers to be involved with our professional organizations at the local, state and national levels. When you have questions and concerns, contact the Society of Nuclear

Medicine, the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board and the Joint Review Committee in Nuclear Medicine Technology. Use your professional organizations and become a team player, because as a team we can meet any challenge and even use these changes to our advantage.

I would like to thank Jim Greene and the Board of Directors for letting me serve as your chair to the board. It has been a challenging and rewarding experience. I would also like to welcome Nancy Sawyer to the position of NMTCB chair; the changeover will occur in January 1996.

Examination Results

The number of applicants for the June 1995 NMTCB certification exam continued at last year's record high level, despite the chilling effect of health care reform on employment opportunities for newly graduated nuclear medicine technologists and the related reduction in the number of NMT program enrollees and graduates. A total of 575 technologists took the June exam. Of that number, two-thirds (385) made a passing grade and one-third (190) did not. The passing rate in past years has been higher, with 78.3% passing during the 1994 testing cycle.

The reduction in pass rate may be related to the number of persons retaking the exam (repeaters) and the number of alternate eligibility examinees as both groups tend to make lower scores. There were 114 repeaters in June and 215 alternate eligibility examinees. The average score for CAHEA/JRCNMT program graduates was 141.5, the average score for repeaters was 113.2 and the average score for alternate eligibility examinees was 124.8.

The number of applications for the September 1995 certification exam broke another record with 862 technologists qualifying to take the last exam in the 1995 testing cycle. This represents an 8.7% increase in applications over the previous record of last September and includes 130 alternate eligibility applicants for whom this exam will be the last opportunity to qualify on the basis of the former alternate eligibility criteria. The results of the September exam will be reported when they become available.