

**Martha W. Pickett, CNMT
Chair**

At our most recent board meeting, the directors discussed a variety of issues related to educational reform as well as health care reform, especially in terms of potential impact on nuclear medicine technologists and their certification status.

CAHEA Requirements for the NMTCB Examination

As most program directors know by now, the Joint Review Committee of Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) has become an independent accrediting body upon the demise of CAHEA at the end of May. Accordingly, the NMTCB has modified its requirement which states that candidates for the exam must graduate from a "CAHEA accredited program." Programs currently accredited by CAHEA will automatically be accredited by the JRCNMT. Wording on the exam application now will state that students must graduate from a program "accredited by CAHEA/JRCNMT" to effectively cover the change, and we do not anticipate any delay in verifying students' credentials as a result.

The NMTCB is aware of possible changes in accreditation that may be more far-reaching than switching from CAHEA to JRCNMT. In the health care reform environment, there have been many recent discussions about the need for accreditation in its present form, especially from leaders at academic institutions. Discussion has even focused on how we educate and certify health care professionals. Most of the comments seem to center around the increasing specialization of health care and health care providers, which many feel has contributed to higher health care costs. As we begin to think of new ways of providing health care, we will also be asked to consider new ways of educating and evaluating how well we educate nuclear medicine technologists. This may spell some significant changes in accreditation of educational programs

Examination Dates The Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board 1994-1995

Year	Exam Date	Application Deadline
1994	June 25	April 16
1994	September 24	July 16
1995	June 24	April 15
1995	September 23	July 15

For more information or to request an application, contact:

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and requirements for the professional exam. We are keeping abreast of these developments and will report back in this column, and in other arenas where appropriate, when significant changes do occur. Educators should be aware that this will be an important topic at the educators' forum at the annual meeting in Orlando.

Computerized Testing

In looking at some of the new technology now available, the Board is investigating computerized testing of the NMTCB. A potential advantage includes a much quicker turn-around time on scores, possibly even upon completion of the exam. This would be an asset to those candidates who depend on a successful test score for employment or a salary increase.

Another bonus is the capability of providing many more testing sites as these exams can be administered in a variety of facilities that have computer capabilities. The test can be administered on a day and time convenient to the candidate.

There is also the possibility of constructing an exam that is less than the standard 225 questions, depending on the candidate's ability to answer the first set of questions. Obviously, there are higher direct costs associated with this new technology but these should be offset by savings a candidate would see in more convenient testing facilities and a faster turn-around time, which in turn could have a financial impact. The Board is researching this new technology and associated costs to determine how we might want to adopt this means of testing in the future. Other health professions are already using computerized testing quite successfully, including cytotechnology and medical technology.

Continuing Education Requirements

For the past several years, the Board has considered a continuing education requirement to maintain CNMT certification. After much deliberation, the Board has decided not to make such a requirement at this time. The Board strongly endorses the concept of continuing education as one means of maintaining competency but feels that requiring CE does not ensure that the technologist would in fact remain competent. Additionally, many states with licensure now have a similar requirement, and the Board has chosen to let continuing education remain under the authority of the states.

Specialty Exams

Another issue that has surfaced recently has been the development of specialized advanced competency exams in such areas as cardiology, SPECT, PET and so forth. In today's market, there tends to be more of a focus on general practice as opposed to a more specialized practice. As mentioned previously, there have been numerous discussions in the health care reform arena that indicate increasing specialization has added to

the cost of health care in America. On the other hand, many health care professionals, including nuclear medicine technologists, work for many years developing expertise in a particular area and would like to see that expertise recognized in some fashion.

On the most recent annual renewal form, some questions were directed toward your interest in advanced specialty exams. Because the market for such exams may be quite small and the costs

of producing a quality exam are quite high, candidates for such exams could expect to pay more for a specialty exam than for the general NMTCB exam. Initial feedback has indicated a general interest in specialty exams, but a definite concern about cost was also expressed. As these survey results are tabulated, we will make recommendations about their feasibility.

Finally, the NMTCB continues to attend and work with other imaging spe-

cialties who are part of the Summit on Radiologic Sciences and Sonography (formerly the Summit on Manpower). Since recruitment and retention issues have been resolved, at least for the present time, the Summit has changed its name and focus to address the needs of the membership in the changing health care environment. The NMTCB will continue to take an active and proactive role in representing the interests of the profession.