

## NMTCB REPORT

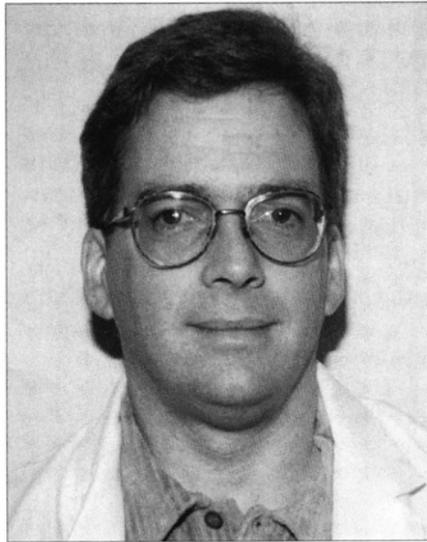
Daniel Leahey, CNMT, Chair

The first order of business is to thank all of the people who have contacted the NMTCB in response to topics in the last report as well as other issues. We always appreciate when people take the time to share their thoughts and concerns with us.

The NMTCB strives to meet the changing needs of the nuclear medicine technologist. As we celebrate our twentieth anniversary with special events at the SNM Annual Meeting in Toronto, we will be reminded that change does not always mean something new. As we reflect on the past with former board members and long-time technologists, it may be difficult at times to discern between past and present issues.

Consider the requirements for first-time applicants to the NMTCB certification exam. During my last term with the NMTCB board, we grappled with the alternate eligibility issue. This refers to the candidate who has not graduated from an accredited nuclear medicine technologist training program. How many of these programs were there 20 years ago? We revised our criteria, hoping to best serve the needs of the health care delivery system. We wanted to ensure that candidates met at least the minimum program requirements since we had no other mechanism for assessing their training. The deadline for accepting alternate eligibility candidates immediately preceded the introduction of our new CAT exam. There is no mistaking the effect on exam data.

As previously reported, there was a higher than typical passing rate during the initial months of the new CAT exam. It now appears that this was largely due to a self-selective process of the best prepared and most enthusiastic candidates at that time altering the traditional mix of candidates taking the exam. In fact, the NMTCB candidate pool had been changing dramatically due to the announced



nonacceptance of nonaccredited program graduates after 1995.

When we looked at passing rates between 1992 and 1995, there was a clear distinction between candidates from accredited programs versus those from other backgrounds. In fact, as we approached the deadline for alternate eligibility, the pass rate for the alternate eligibility group fell sharply. Another group that traditionally fared worse was the repeat exam candidate. Many of these candidates were alternate eligibility also. With the CAT exam, the alternate eligibility group is essentially under-represented. This leaves a current total candidate pool of accredited program graduates that, as a group, has scored higher than alternate eligibility candidates. Remember that the new CAT exam was anchored on the 1994 paper-and-pencil exam since this reflected the most recent task analysis influence on the exam blueprint. (The recently completed task analysis will not alter the exam blueprint until 1999.) Exam content did not change with the CAT introduction; the candidate population changed.

A detailed summary of the new CAT exam experience from July 1996 through December 1997 is in

the latest NMTCB newsletter. If you did not receive a newsletter, please contact the NMTCB.

This leaves us with one of our twentieth anniversary questions. How can we meet the needs of nonaccredited program candidates seeking the CAT exam? Surely there will still be some candidates who have entered the realm of nuclear medicine technology through an alternate route and still need to meet some minimum requirements to qualify for the exam.

How was this issue addressed in the early days of the NMTCB? How will it be addressed in the future? Currently we are not testing a group that had made up 20–30% of our total candidate population. Where are they now? Should there be a mechanism for them to sit for the exam?

We currently show a decrease in total NMTCB exam candidates from a peak of almost 1400 in 1994/1995 to less than 800 last year. Where have all of the candidates gone? How will we reach newer programs that may not be listed currently as accredited programs? The candidate pool is not only changing in size but also changing location.

We recognize that, as a group, accredited programs have been graduating smaller classes on average. This by definition reduces our NMTCB candidate pool. It will be well worth watching some of the newer program models that are emphasizing multimodality training. Their success and ability to satisfy employer needs would be a positive influence in recruiting more people into this field. With the nation in a strong economy and health care reorganization maturing into new phases, there are definite signs of increased demand for technologists. After 20 years, the NMTCB, remains committed to ensuring that the best-qualified technologists represent us all in every hospital and clinic.

## **NMTCB REPORT**

Please plan on spending a few minutes at the NMTCB booth in Toronto. If you are unable to make it to Toronto, please contact us at the Atlanta office (800-659-3953) or visit our web page, which is being renovated, at [www.NMTCB.org](http://www.NMTCB.org). Don't forget—the invisible heroes of the NMTCB are the item writers. New and old item writers are always

welcome, especially those who can send digitized images. Contact any NMTCB board member or the Atlanta office for updated item writing information.

A final note concerns reciprocity with Canada. The Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) must comply with Canadian federal law regarding

labor mobility and can no longer offer reciprocity to CNMTs in Canada as of December 31, 1997. The NMTCB, therefore, must withdraw reciprocity for Canadian-certified nuclear medicine technologists. We are interested in hearing from our northern border members of any potential problems caused by this altered agreement.

### **Applications for NMTCB Director**

The Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board is seeking applicants to serve on the Board of Directors. This is an excellent opportunity to become involved in one of the more challenging and important areas of your profession—establishing standards of professional competency. Interested CNMTs should request an application and direct any questions to Dr. Jim Greene, Executive Director, at 800-659-3953 or [drgreene@nmtcb.org](mailto:drgreene@nmtcb.org). Completed applications received by August 1, 1998 will be reviewed at the fall NMTCB Board meeting. The new term of office begins January 1, 1999.