

## **NCBTMB Responses to Stakeholders Questions About the Exam**

For the past 15 years, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) has administered the national certification program – a program consisting of:

- Multiple examination options
  - National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB)
  - National Certification Examination for Therapeutic Massage (NCETM)
- A Recertification program that promulgates professional development through continuing education, academic coursework, professionally-related certifications, research activities, and/or professional publications, as well as mandatory hands-on practice
- A NCBTMB Standards of Practice
- A NCBTMB Code of Ethics

In the past four years, NCBTMB has delivered almost 100,000 exams to prospective certificants with over 80,000 practitioners currently holding one of NCBTMB's credentials. To date, 37 states and the District of Columbia regulate the massage and bodywork profession. Thirty states and the District of Columbia currently utilize or recognize one of NCBTMB's examinations either in statute or in rule.

In recent months, some within the massage and bodywork community have attempted to create doubt around NCBTMB's certification program and its related components. In response, NCBTMB would like to cite the fact that NCBTMB's examination programs are in strict compliance with the:

- National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Accreditation Guidelines
- Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, NCME and APA, 1999)
- Guidelines on Employment Selection Procedures (EEOC, 1978)

The NCETMB certification program has been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) since 1993. Further, NCBTMB is in the process of seeking accreditation status through the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). In keeping with best practices for certification, NCBTMB conducts job analyses every five years to make sure its tested content remains pertinent and relevant to current practice. NCBTMB will conduct another job analysis in 2007, with Carole Ostendorf leading the charge as Chair of the task force responsible for these activities. Given these points, it becomes patently obvious that the credibility of NCBTMB's examination programs has never been more evident.

In addition to challenging the validity of NCBTMB's examinations, there has been a need expressed to create another examination (i.e. an entry level licensing examination) for the profession. NCBTMB believes the creation of another exam will lead to confusion for the profession and be a detriment for availing reciprocity between states for practitioners. The reality is that NCBTMB already has an examination option available for states to use called the National Examination for State Licensing (NESL). With the NESL, individual states are able to determine their own statutory (or adopted

rule) educational requirements and/or criteria for practitioners, and still have a proven, credible examination at their disposal.

NCBTMB is committed to serving the needs of its stakeholder population. Among the many groups that NCBTMB has identified as stakeholders are over 80,000 certificants, prospective certificants currently studying massage and/or bodywork, massage schools and training programs, and state regulatory boards. Given this, NCBTMB has implemented significant strategic moves to enhance the services and processes associated with the national certification program. These initiatives include:

- 800 call center opened from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CT, five days a week
- NCBTMB sponsorship of a state regulatory meeting (November 2006) to develop a practitioner disciplinary database and NCBTMB has committed to sponsoring another meeting in 2007
- Online application process for certification and recertification
- Establishment of a Distance Education Task Force to consider additional options to the current requirement of 500 hours of in-class education
- Establishment of a School Outreach Advisory Panel (SOAP) to provide information and advice to the Board as well as to develop and implement strategic NCBTMB initiatives in working with schools
- Revision of the CE Provider application
- Currently revising the Candidate Handbook Application to facilitate accurate completion by applicants
- Hiring a Deputy Director, Director of Education, School Outreach Manager, and additional application coordinators and CE provider processing coordinators to facilitate NCBTMB's services and activities
- National office moved to a stand alone organization (November 2005)
- Director of Government Relations continually monitors all regulatory laws/rules as well as serves as a resource to regulatory boards regarding NCBTMB's certification program

NCBTMB wants to inform you that the certification program is strong; states may select to use either of the national certification examinations as they are or under the National Examination for State Licensing (NESL); and, the organization will continue to be guided by its mission.

#### NCBTMB's Mission

To foster high standards of ethical and professional practice in the delivery of services through a recognized credible credentialing program that assures the competency of practitioners of therapeutic massage and bodywork.