

Date: July 1, 2010

To: National Board Dental Examination Stakeholders

From: Dr. Mark Christensen, Chair, Committee for an Integrated Examination
Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations

Subject: Replacement of NBDE Part I and NBDE Part II With an Integrated Examination

At its meeting in April 2009, the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE) created the Committee for an Integrated Examination (CIE). The charge of the CIE is to develop and validate a new examination instrument for dentistry that integrates basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences to assess entry level competency in dental practice to assist state boards of dentistry in evaluating candidates for dental licensure. The new examination will replace NBDE Part I and Part II. The decision to make a change of this magnitude was not taken lightly. This project is a component of the JCNDE strategic plan which identified a need to develop contemporary assessment formats and approaches to evaluate candidates for licensure. The creation of an integrated examination is not a project to be rushed, it is expected it will take a minimum of five-years to complete. It is a challenging but exciting opportunity to develop an assessment instrument reflective of dentistry in the 21st century.

I serve as Chair of the CIE. Other members of the committee are: Dr. Ellen B. Byrne, Dr. Bruce D. Horn, Dr. Ron J. Seeley, Dr. Stephen T. Radack III and Dr. Andrew Spielman. Consistency and continuity are important in any long term project both internally to ensure the work moves forward and externally to facilitate communication between the CIE and stakeholder groups; therefore committee members will serve for the duration of the project. In addition, three consultants are assisting the CIE to ensure the psychometric soundness of the new examination. These consultants are: Dr. Gregory J. Cizek, Professor of Educational Measurement and Evaluation at the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Dr. Michael T. Kane, Holder of Messick Chair in Validity at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey and Dr. Steven M. Downing an Associate Professor of Medical Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The CIE met this year in January and May. In January, the committee reviewed the status of the current examination program. Other topics discussed included: innovative licensure examinations used by other professions, the potential for new item formats, the ideal composition of test construction committees and the need to plan a smooth transition from the current examinations to the new integrated examination. Two work groups were formed to prepare information for the May meeting: one group was charged to identify the domain of dentistry while a second group was charged to explore items types.

During the May meeting, the committee reviewed the information on item types and decided to hold further discussion until more fundamental issues were addressed. The identification of the domain of dentistry was identified as a major component that would serve as the foundation for

subsequent work. The committee also discussed the process for integrating basic and clinical sciences into one examination. Two workgroups, Model and Process, were formed to prepare information for the next meeting. The Model group will draft a model that describes the domain of dentistry and the Process group will draft a plan for allocating basic and clinical science content on the integrated examination.

A major priority of the CIE is communication with stakeholders. The CIE plans to share information and solicit feedback at points along the way as the project progresses. Several mechanisms are being developed that will allow stakeholders to comment and share feedback with the CIE, the JCNDE and with each other. The JCNDE recognizes that any major change in an examination program may present challenges but it also provides the potential for innovation and creativity which may be enhanced by open sharing of information. Comments of colleagues may spark new ideas and provide alternate perspectives. The CIE anticipates some material will be ready for review in early 2011. Directions regarding where and how to access draft documents and provide feedback will be disseminated as soon as details are finalized. Until a permanent mechanism is set into place, feedback on any issues addressed in this memo can be sent to jcndecie@ada.org.

I am confident that the end result of this project will be a new examination that reflects the changing needs of the dental profession. The committee values your perspective and hopes you will take an interest in the project and be part of the process by reviewing its work and providing feedback. The addition of your perspective will enable achievement of a better outcome than the CIE would accomplish by itself.

Please feel free to pass this communication on to anyone you believe would be interested or should be aware of the information. If you received this memo from someone else, please take a moment to send your contact information to gonsoulina@ada.org so you can be included in future communiqués.

I look forward to hearing from you.

MC/JK/s