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American Academy of Physicians Assistants

2120 L STREET, N.W. THE GELMAN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037

August 5, 1975

DONALD W. FISHER, Ph.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Academy Members on the National Commission on Certification
of Physician's Assistants

Steven Joyner, P.A.
Ron Audette, Mx
Fred Olenberger, P.A.
Robert France, U.A.

FROM: Thomas R. Godkins, President
American Academy of Physicians' Assistants
Member, National Commission

SUBJECT: Recent Academy Board Meeting and Upcoming Meeting of the
National Commission

Enclosed you will find an excerpt of the unapproved minutes of the Board of Directors meeting July 12, 1975. Obviously, a great amount of debate occurred over "generic" accreditation and certification. A great amount of time at our last Board Meeting was spent discussing these two issues and the outcome is visible in the enclosed unapproved minutes. Suffice it to say that the Academy Board is in support of generic certification: developing a core examination upon which specialty examinations could be built and certifying individuals as physician's assistants in primary care, physician's assistants in surgery, etc. Dr. Richard Rosen has sincere concerns about the future of the surgical assistant in view of a current non-generic specialty program accreditation mechanism, the National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants, which administers only one specialty examination -- that in primary care, and the development of the American Association of Surgical Assistants which will tend to only fragment the voice of P.A.'s throughout the country. I personally share Dr. Rosen's concerns and the Board's position is visible in the unapproved minutes.

I would like each of you to contact me in writing and/or, perhaps preferably, by phone to discuss the following issues:

1. After a year's experience on the National Commission, what are your personal perceptions of the Commission's operation (your interface with and observations of the National Commission's staff);

SYNOPSIS OF UNAPPROVED MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

JULY 12, 1975

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CERTIFICATION OF PA'S - David Glazer, M.A., Executive Director

Mr. Glazer stated that the accreditation process ought to rest with the Academy in regards to recording of CME credit for members and non-members. Commission guidelines require that physician's assistants need 100 hours of continuing medical education credit every two years. They suggest 50 hours per year to prevent the cramming of hours into a small period of time at the end of a recertification deadline. Recertification will occur every six years by competency testing and eventually performance-based testing. He foresees three major areas of testing: (1) primary care, (2) pediatrics, and (3) surgery, in the near future. The American College of Surgeons approached the National Commission to develop a specialty exam for surgical P.A.'s. At this time, cost factor was too great, which did not make it feasible to implement this demand. In the absence of this exam, the National Commission is considering establishing a registry for specialty P.A.'s. The eligibility committee states that any graduate of a surgical assistant program may sit for the primary care exam if he has been working as a primary care P.A. for 1½ years. Dr. Rosen expressed the opinion that the present core exam should be for all P.A.'s and when it becomes cost-effective, then establish specialty exams. Presently, the current primary care examination does not qualify a P.A. as a surgical assistant. Dr. Rosen further added that if the Academy doesn't change the exams, this will result in a split of P.A.'s with the surgical P.A.'s forming their own group. Mr. Glazer added that the Commission is locked into a contract with DHEW and does not have the latitude to change the examination. As for future scheduling, it is projected that the exam will occur in late August or September in the coming years. There is also the possibility that the exam could be scheduled two times per year depending upon demand and cost-analysis. After much discussion, the Board took the following action:

Resolved, that the Academy establish a position paper regarding the surgical P.A. being encouraged to take the certifying exam this year and that the Commission Eligibility Committee allow them to do so.

Resolved, that the Academy accepts the Commission's requirements for recertification which will be 100 hours of continuing education credit every two years.

Resolved, that the Academy accepts responsibility for accrediting and certifying of all CME credits for new health practitioners and will report such credits to the National Commission as required. The Academy recommends strongly to new health practitioners that they complete some CME each year.

Resolved, the Academy accepts the National Commission as co-sponsor of the Annual Conference in name only with no financial remuneration.

Resolved, the Academy endorses the guidelines for P.A.'s re-registration as developed by the National Commission.

Memo
August 5, 1975

2. Your interface, as a National Commission member, with the Academy's National Office and its staff;
3. Your views relative to the surgical assistant problem.

You can reach me during the day at (405)271-5048 or in the evening at home at (405)755-0113. I would very much enjoy talking with all of you though before closing, I would like to request that you respond to my questions above in writing also. I will keep in touch, and needless to say, I will be present at the next Commission meeting in Washington on November 3, 1975.

TRG/dm

cc: Donald Fisher, Ph.D.
C. Hilmon Castle, M.D.
David Glazer, M.A.
Academy Board of Directors

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