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AAPA
American Academy of Physicians Assistants
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20037

DON W. FISHER, Ph.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 1st., 1974

John P. Hubbard, M. D.
President and Director
National Board of Medical Examiners
3930 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

Dear Dr. Hubbard:

The membership of the Academy, during its recent meeting in New Orleans expressed marked concern over the use of expanded eligibility criteria for this years NBME Certifying Examination for the Assistant to the Primary Care Physician. While the Academy supports the concept of graduate certification through national examination, we fail to see how modified criteria for this years examination will assist in establishing a national standard of performance for graduates of approved educational programs.

The adoption of educational "Essentials" directed at requiring minimum student preparation along with the process of program review and accreditation under the auspices of the American Medical Association have proved helpful in defining the preparation of the physician's assistant. Various medical groups, federal agencies, state organizations and the lay community have begun using these rather stable criteria as a means of recognizing the competent assistant. I would assume the state medical Boards have also begun to look closely at the activities of the National Board as a means of acquiring yet another measure of graduate performance. More important is the fact that while altering the criteria for eligibility one raises serious questions as to the need for educational essentials and a program review process while running the risk of rekindling much confusion in the identification of this new dependent health practitioner.

With these facts in mind the Academy stands opposed to the use of the expanded eligibility criteria and recommends that all candidates for the certifying examination to the Assistant to the Primary Care Physician be graduates of formerly approved educational programs.

The efforts of Dr. Sadler's Subcommittee on Eligibility, those of your Advisory Committee, as well as the actions of your Executive Board that adopted the expanded eligibility criteria were well meaning, I am sure. Regardless, it is the opinion of the Academy that strong consideration be given to a reversal of the current widely known position of the National Board. Should the National Board of Medical Examiners, following review of this matter by its Advisory Committee and executive boards, admit individuals to this years NBME Certifying Examination under the expanded eligibility criteria to which this organization stands opposed it is further recommended that the designation of a pass/fail point be based upon

the examinations taken by graduates of formal educational programs.

While not having had the chance to discuss these matters with you personally, I have conveyed our concerns to Dr. Barbara Andrew of your staff and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter at greater length.

Sincerely yours,

C. Emil Fasser
President, AAPA

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