

July 10, 1980

Dear Colleague:

After five long years, countless hours and the efforts of several individuals, an examination addressing the proficiency of surgical PA's finally exists. The mechanism to date is not optimal but we must start somewhere.

A surgical examination consisting of 100 multiple choice questions can be taken by any certified PA or by any PA seated for the 1980 NCCPA examination. The cost of the surgical examination to the individual PA is expensive (\$145).

All of you should have application material for the examination by now. If the NCCPA has not mailed an application to you, please promptly call or write their office at the address listed below:

National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants  
3384 Peach Tree Road, NE  
Suite 560  
Atlanta, GA 30326 (404) 261-1261

I sense an overwhelming temptation among surgical PA's to not take a surgical examination. After all, who wants to take another examination? Especially, one that "doesn't mean anything." Furthermore, one can always take the examination at a later date when it is more to one's advantage.

Unfortunately, the realities spell disaster if the above attitudes prevail. No one wants to take another examination particularly one costing \$145. However, surgical PA's must make that sacrifice this year. The response to a surgical examination this year will be held up as evidence of the need for such an examination and will be used as a measure of the PA's really working in surgery. A poor turnout for the examination portends no future surgical examinations. Such an occurrence means PA's working in surgery will not be required to demonstrate any basic knowledge referable to surgery other than the miniscule amount of material currently incorporated in the NCCPA entry level board examination.

The deck is stacked against the surgical PA in terms of inconvenience, nearly prohibitive cost (not counting transportation) and a July 31 deadline for application submission complete with passport photo and notary public seal! It almost seems as though someone wants to prove that surgical PA's as a group are small, inconsequential and not worth the bother (paranoia?).

Surgical personalities are supposed to lean toward the aggressive side and underdogs have to be downright feisty. So please bare your teeth and "bite the bullet." Never before has one issue at any given point in time been more pivotal to the future of surgical PA's.

Please register promptly and take the surgical proficiency examination this fall.

Sincerely,



David J. Bissonette, P.A.-C  
Immediate past President  
American Association of Surgeon's  
Assistants