



NATIONAL BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS

3930 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNA 19104

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Office of the President

April 24, 1974

Robert E. Jewett, M.D.
President
Association for Physician
Assistant Programs
Emory University School of Medicine
Woodruff Memorial Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30322

Dear Dr. Jewett:

With your letter of April 16 in hand, may I first congratulate you upon your election to the Presidency of the Association for Physician Assistant Programs, and I also feel like congratulating the Association for having prevailed upon you to accept this important role.

As I assume you realize, your letter was not surprising to me since I recently had a telephone conversation with Dr. Alfred Sadler in which he was expressing his concern and the concern of your Association in opening up eligibility for the 1974 examination for those physician's assistants who meet carefully laid down criteria based on their work experience. Since Dr. Sadler has himself been Chairman of a Subcommittee of our Advisory Committee for the Physician's Assistant Examination Program, he is altogether familiar with the course of events leading up to the decision that has been made for the 1974 examination. The matter was first thoroughly discussed in his Subcommittee and a recommendation was then made to the parent Advisory Committee to open up eligibility according to the guidelines that had been so carefully considered by the Subcommittee. After full discussion at a meeting of the Advisory Committee, the expanded eligibility for the 1974 examination was recommended to the National Board. This recommendation was discussed and approved--again after full discussion--at the Annual Meeting of our Board on March 23, 1974. This decision now, therefore, is firmly established and notice of it has been made publicly, including Dr. Andrew's statement at the recent Physician's Assistant Conference in New Orleans.

Dr. Sadler, in speaking to me about the present view of the Association for Physician Assistant Programs, asked whether the National Board might be willing to reconsider its position on the eligibility criteria for 1974. My

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answer to him was the same as that which I now wish to pass on to you. If there should come to our attention evidence of a strong consensus not only within the Association for Physician Assistant Programs, but also within the American Academy of Physicians' Assistants and if this strong consensus should come to us very promptly, I would then take this to our Executive Committee to see whether consideration should be given to a reversal of the current, widely known position of the National Board. I suspect that our Executive Committee would request a review of the matter by our Advisory Committee before taking any action. All of this would, of course, take time and we really do not have very much time to deal with the matter. We are now at the point of preparing and distributing on a national basis the application forms for the December examination.

Since we do not have any communication from the American Academy of Physicians' Assistants recommending reversal of our position, it appears to me that the case for a radical change in plans at this late date is not sufficiently strong to expect our Executive Committee to take action in relation to your letter of April 16. I am, however, forwarding a copy of your letter together with a copy of my reply to Dr. Edmund Pellegrino as Chairman of our Advisory Committee on the Physician's Assistant Program.

I gather that one of the points that has been made in support of holding eligibility criteria to those established for the 1973 examination is difficulty that might be encountered by the National Board in handling the large numbers of applications that may come to us resulting from the expanded eligibility. We too have been anticipating that we will be receiving a large number of applications, but we are quite prepared to cope with the necessary detail.

I would like to emphasize one further point. We are talking about the 1974 examination only. At our Board Meeting in March, it was recognized that the proposed National Commission on Certification of Physician's Assistants will probably be established in time to assist in determination of eligibility requirements subsequent to the 1974 examination. In earlier discussion dealing with the formation of the proposed Commission, there was some thought that it might be operative in time to deal with eligibility requirements for 1974. It is now, however, obvious that the Commission will not be formed in time to deal with this matter since, as noted above, we are really at the point of having to prepare and distribute applications for the 1974 examination.

With all best personal wishes.

Sincerely yours,



John P. Hubbard, M.D.
President and Director

JPH:kh

cc: C. Emil Fasser
Paul Moson
Edmund D. Pellegrino, M.D.
Alfred Sadler, M.D.