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## **Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition Touts NBCE Standards** **Lori A. Burkhart**

According to Jeffrey E. Weber, DC, DCBCN, president of the Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition, the CBCN has achieved something no other board ever has by having the examination for the CBCN developed jointly with the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) and administered electronically by American College Testing (ACT) at ACT testing centers. He stresses the importance of enhanced professional credibility because the NBCE is the principal testing agency for the chiropractic profession.

Joining with NBCE is a landmark for the profession, says Juanee Surprise, DC, DCBCN, CBCN secretary. She explains that CBCN wanted to emulate the medical profession and have a DC-only nutrition board because patients look for specialty certification. Also, when insurance companies want to know if a medical doctor is board certified in a specialty, they go to the American Board of Medical Specialties and the ABMS directs them to their MD-only specialty board. "We would like to see the same for chiropractic specialty boards through the American Board of Chiropractic Specialties (ABCS), of which the CBCN is a member," says Dr. Surprise.

"We wanted to follow the trail that already had been blazed, because it is recognized," Dr. Surprise says. "That is what we did in becoming the first board to work directly with the NBCE, because they are the national testing arm for our profession." She says it gives validation via prescribed testing standards with proper job analysis, Delphi study and test development that make a standardized test defensible.

### **Test Validation**

According to NBCE, it conducted a standard-setting committee meeting in Greeley, Colo., on Aug. 26-27, 2011, along with seven representatives of the CBCN after the first examination was administered to 35 candidates. The CBCN had requested assistance in developing a test for certification, and a test committee had met in May 2011 to select two 200-item exams. NBCE explained that having an appropriate committee recommend a cut score after having participated in a legally defensible and psychometrically sound standard-setting procedure is one of the most important steps in test development and validation. It marked a big accomplishment considering it was only on June 2, 2009, that the American Chiropractic Association announced the formation of the CBCN, which it said was now authorized to grant diplomate status in the field of clinical nutrition. The CBCN was created and operates under the auspices of the ACA with full autonomy in the areas of testing standards and procedures.

Dr. Surprise says there was an element of serendipity involved when CBCN went to NBCE for testing assistance. "When our board came to fruition, we decided to emulate the way the medical profession operated because we felt, 'Why reinvent the wheel?'" she explains. The NBCE had completed development of the national board exams, Parts I through IV, and was able to take on helping the CBCN. "So it worked out that we approached NBCE at the right time." Dr. Surprise recommends that other boards follow in CBCN's footsteps with NBCE testing. The test is administered by ACT, so DCs can take the exam at geographically accessible ACT testing sites.

## **Diplomate Programs**

Dr. Surprise also promotes diplomates in general. She points out that many DCs have turned away from earning diplomates since the economy declined because of money issues, which also is a consideration for the more expensive master's programs. "I think we put ourselves in a bad position and should be pushing the diplomate programs to gain specialists," Dr. Surprise says.

She also disagrees with the premise that DCs should be earning a master's degree in order to be a specialist. She argues that a master's or PhD is fine in order to teach or do research but not necessary for a clinical practice in an office setting. "Ultimately, you need to be board certified because that is what patients look for, and that is what legislators and insurance companies understand," she says. "If we are going to fit in and become part of the medical model with national health care, or whatever model we end up with, my opinion is that DCs should be primary care physicians." She adds that it makes sense for DCs to have specialties and then refer to chiropractic specialists rather than allowing patients to drift away or into the medical model, unless that is what they need. "I am an old RN. I am not against drugs and surgeries; I just believe we should try the noninvasive things first. I think we all should be working together."

Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition

Diplomate Exam Dates: January 19-25, 2013

For more information, go to [www.cbcn.us](http://www.cbcn.us)

From the NBCE Annual Report: 2011 Major Accomplishments

The NBCE assisted the Chiropractic Board of Clinical Nutrition in preparing an exam and administering it to candidates in the United States and to one candidate in South Korea. The National Board also conducted a Standards-Setting Committee meeting with the CBCN, and scores were given to this board for reporting to candidates along with the recommended passing score.