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2009 ABHP Activities

Cheryl Olson, CHP, 2009 ABHP Chair

I am pleased to report that the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) had a successful year due to the continued efforts and hard work of the Board, as well as the Part I and Part II panels. I will summarize the Board's activities throughout 2009. The ABHP held its fall Board Meeting in McLean, Virginia, 20-21 November 2009.

The primary mission of the Board is to steward the preparation and administration of the certification exam each year. This extraordinary task is only accomplished through the dedication of the Part I and Part II panel chairs and members. The Board gratefully thanks Jerry Hensley (Part I Chair) and Andy Miller (Part II chair) for their exceptional efforts in developing a fair and challenging exam.

The 2009 Certification Exam was administered on 13 July 2009 at several locations, including the 2009 Health Physics Society Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. One hundred and sixty-five candidates sat for one or both parts of the exam this year, slightly less than the average of 179 candidates over the previous seven years. The ABHP granted 18 additional certifications in 2009.

One hundred and eighteen candidates took the Part I exam, compared to 106 in 2008. Part I of the 2009 exam was passed by 43 candidates, yielding a passing rate of 36 percent (compared to the passing rates of 38 percent in 2008 and 49 percent in 2007). Review of exam performance indicated that it was not necessary to drop or rescore any questions.

Sixty-four candidates took the ABHP Part II exam this year. Eighteen candidates scored greater than the passing threshold of 469 points, resulting in a 28 percent passing rate (as compared to 59 percent in 2008 and 32 percent in 2007).

The grading process continues to be fairly smooth with overall consistency in grading evident. Exam questions covered all the domains of practice. No questions were ignored by the candidates. The questions, in general, appeared to adequately discriminate between passing and failing candidates. Overall, the consistency among graders was very good.

The results of the exam represent a fair and accurate assessment of the candidates.

Professional Standards and Ethics Committee

Ruth E. McBurney, CHP, Chair

The Academy's Professional Standards and Ethics Committee is charged with defining the Standards of Professional Responsibility for Certified Health Physicists and reviewing all complaints about unethical practice referred to the committee by the Executive Committee. The Standards of Profes-

sional Responsibility are in place and they have been reviewed.

The Professional Standards and Ethics Committee is a standing committee of the American Academy of Health Physics composed of five members of the Academy. Serving on the committee in 2010 in addition to the chair

are Cheryl Olson, Jack Fix, Paul Rohwer (rotating back onto the committee for another term), and Nancy Kirner.

It appears that all CHPs have been conducting themselves in a professional and ethical manner as no complaints have been referred to the committee in the recent

past. In spite of the lack of formal complaints, the committee continues to explore other ethics questions from the Executive Committee, such as the use of CHP in a business name. The committee also serves as a clearinghouse for

professional standards and ethics questions from CHPs and others in the profession of health physics.

Another responsibility of the Professional Standards and Ethics Committee is the establishment of

procedures for selecting, awarding, and announcing the Joyce P. Davis Award winners. Those procedures are in place. They have been reviewed and a call has been issued for nominations for the 2010 Joyce P. Davis Memorial Award.

AAHP Appeals Committee

Gregory G. Hall, CHP, Chair

Any health physicist who is denied certification or certification renewal by the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) may appeal the decision through a formal process developed by the American Academy of Health Physics (AAHP). The process complies with requirements of the Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards (CESB) of which the ABHP is an accredited Member Board.

The CESB requires that the ABHP prescribe, maintain, and publish procedures that certification candidates can use to appeal actions and decisions of the ABHP pertaining to the candidate's application and certification. The ABHP meets this requirement as described in the Bylaws of the American Academy of Health Physics (January 2006). The ABHP Prospectus, available on the ABHP Web site, states that any applicant denied certification may appeal the action of the ABHP by contacting the Executive Secretary within six months of notification of results.

The Bylaws (Section 6.3.3) state the actions of the ABHP in awarding certification or certification renewal

are final except that an individual who has been denied certification or certification renewal may request a review of that decision by the Appeals Committee established by the AAHP. The Appeals Committee is a standing committee of the AAHP. The Appeals Committee consists of three plenary members of the AAHP, excluding current members of the ABHP or its examination panels. Appeals Committee members for 2010 include Gregory Hall, Nicholas Panzarino, and Penny Shamblin.

The Bylaws (Sections 7.10.1 through 7.10.6) discuss the procedural process following an appeal. The Appeals Committee is responsible for reviewing the appeal. The review shall be limited to a determination as to whether the policies and procedures of the ABHP have been properly carried out. The results of the review are reported to the AAHP president and the ABHP chair. If there is a finding of a failure to comply with a policy or procedure, the president shall refer the Appeals Committee's report with recommendations to the chair of the ABHP for resolution. The president shall inform the affected individual of the

outcome of the Appeals Committee's review. The Appeals Committee shall provide an annual report to the Executive Committee prior to the annual meeting of the Academy.

A prospective appellant should fully document how he or she believes that the ABHP did not properly carry out its policies and procedures. Electronic versions of the ABHP policies and procedures are available from the executive secretary upon request. Note that the actual grade on an examination is not appealable; only flaws in following the ABHP policies and procedures are appealable.

Although the Appeals Committee plays an important role in maintaining the integrity of the certification process, it does not make the decision about the appeal. That is the duty and responsibility of the ABHP chair. The Appeals Committee studies the appeal as the appellant presents it and provides the written results of its review and recommendation to the AAHP president, who may add his or her own comments and recommendation before forwarding the package to the ABHP chair for final disposition. ☒