Welcome to the Osteopathic Examiner, a quarterly newsletter providing information about the NBOME’s many activities in the arena of assessment for osteopathic competencies and related health care professions.

NBOME Positioned for Key OCC Role

The NBOME is working hard to realize its vision of “becoming the testing organization for the entire osteopathic profession,” and a number of recent and planned initiatives related to Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) are helping to advance that goal.

The NBOME will participate in an April 17 meeting of the American Osteopathic Association’s Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (AOA-BOS) with Chair Ron Ayers, DO, and AOA Executive Director, John Crosby, JD. The meeting will focus on how the NBOME can partner with specialty boards to implement the components of OCC.

In addition, NBOME President & CEO, John Gimpel, DO, MEd, outlined NBOME’s OCC services in a recent communication to the American Board of Osteopathic Surgeons (ABOS), and the ABOS has invited the NBOME to present to its Board in May.

The NBOME is in active discussions with other specialty boards regarding OCC.

On a related note, the NBOME recently participated in a CEO meeting planned by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to discuss initiatives related to maintenance of licensure (MOL). Held in late February in Chicago at the ABMS offices, participants in addition to the ABMS, NBME and NBOME included the Federation of State Medical Boards and the AOA-BOS.

Annual Board Meeting Establishes Priorities

The NBOME’s Executive Committee (EC) and Board held their annual meetings in December, 2010 in Chicago. Strategic priorities were established, new Board members appointed and others were honored for their service to the NBOME.

Key NBOME priorities for 2011 as established during the meeting include:

- Customer Focus
- Residency Program Director outreach and education
- New products
- COMAT Clinical Subjects Examinations
- Maintenance of Licensure and Osteopathic Continuous Certification
- Test integrity and security

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Four new NBOME Board members were officially installed at the December 2010 annual Board meeting.

Susan Belanger, PhD, RN, (Silver Spring, Maryland) had been previously appointed to the Board by Chair John E. Thornburg, D.O., Ph.D. (Okemos, MI) in October 2010 as a public member, filling the vacancy left by the passing of Mr. Fred Wilson. And during the December Meeting, three other nominees were also elected to the Board. They are: Michael Finley, DO, of the Western University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific (Pomona, California), Rich La Baere, DO, of the Genesys Regional Medical Center (Grand Blanc, Michigan) and Karen Snider, DO, of the A.T. Still University of Health SciencesKirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine (Kirksville, Missouri).

Craig Lenz, DO, who concluded his nine-year tenure as a Board member as of the December 2010 meeting, was honored for his contributions. In addition, Brian Fulton, DO, was recognized for his service to the Board. Dr. Fulton resigned his position as a Board member in November 2010.

Dr. Frederick Meoli Honored with Santucci Award

From left: Dr. John Gimpel, NBOME President & CEO; Dr. John Thornburg, NBOME Board Chair; Dr. Frederick Meoli (Cherry Hill, NJ), former NBOME President and recipient of the 2010 Santucci Award; and Dr. Thomas Santucci Jr., former NBOME Board Chair, in whose honor the award is named.
NBOME to Sponsor AACOM/AODME Annual Meeting; Exhibit at FSMB Annual Meeting

The NBOME will participate and exhibit at two important conferences in April – the joint annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) and the Association of Osteopathic Directors and Medical Educators (AODME) in Baltimore, Maryland, April 13-16, and the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) Annual Meeting in Seattle, Washington, April 28-30. These meetings provide opportunities for NBOME representatives to collaborate with key leaders in the fields of osteopathic education and medical regulation, one of the five goals outlined in the NBOME strategic plan.

At the AACOM/AODME meeting, the NBOME will again sponsor a lunch for all participants, during which NBOME senior leaders provide an update to attendees on our current and planned activities. Top on the agenda will be COMAT, the NBOME’s Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Achievement Test, the recently developed subject examination series for colleges of osteopathic medicine. “We are proud to again support AACOM and, in 2011, the AODME, during their annual meeting,” said NBOME President and CEO, Dr. John Gimpel. “In 2010, virtually every meeting participant attended the NBOME update luncheon, and we look forward to telling this year’s event and sharing the many exciting developments taking place at the NBOME — particularly COMAT examinations.”

Important updates posted to NBOME website

January 31, 2011 - COMLEX-USA Examination Blueprints Updated for Improved Clarity

In order to improve clarity, a number of wording changes and additions were recently made to the COMLEX-USA cognitive examinations blueprint, both Dimension 1-Patient Presentation and Dimension 2-Physician Tasks. It is important to note, these changes reflect clarifications to the existing COMLEX-USA blueprint and do not represent any percentage changes or new examination content. The revised wording is both more precise and explanatory.

The updated blueprints can be found at: http://www.nbome.org/comlex-cbt.asp?m=can.

January 26, 2011 - NBOME Blue Ribbon Panel Progress Report Posted

In 2010, following three years of research and consideration, the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) created a Blue Ribbon Panel to pursue the enhancement of the COMLEX-USA examination series. The Panel convened twice in 2010 to begin to address eventually transitioning the COMLEX-USA series to a two-decision point model - the first at the time of entry into supervised practice (graduate medical education) and the second when entering independent practice. Implementation is expected in 2015-2020. For more information on the Panel’s progress, click here — http://nbome.org/docs/BRP_Report_on_Progress_December_2010.pdf

January 24, 2011 - NBOME Statement regarding inappropriate collaboration released

The NBOME has released a statement regarding inappropriate candidate collaboration with test prep organizations. To read the statement click here — http://www.nbome.org/docs/CollaborationStatement.pdf
Update: COMAT Program on Track

NBOME’s Vice President for Cognitive Testing, Linjun Shen, PhD, MPH, reports steady progress in the NBOME’s COMAT subject examination program.

Final COMAT examination review — particularly focused on confirming integration of osteopathic principles — is nearing completion for the multiple forms of all disciplines, and the seven COMAT subject examinations are expected to be available for colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) to administer by early July 2011.

COMAT was developed to provide COMs with readily available, nationally standardized examination modules to assess their students, including for the purposes of evaluating educational equivalency across varied clinical rotation sites. For more information on COMAT, visit our website (http://www.nbome.org/comatmain.asp?m=coll) or contact NBOME Vice President for Administration & COO, Larry Turner, 1.484.351.2248 or lturner@nbome.org.

COMAT-Foundations Comprehensive Examination
Currently in Development; Committee Being Formed

The NBOME is initiating plans to develop a COMAT comprehensive/integrated basic science examination — COMAT-Foundations — for release in 2012, and is pleased to announce that Board Chair, Dr. John Thornburg, has agreed to Chair the COMAT-Foundations Committee.

COMAT-Foundations will focus on clinical application of key foundational concepts and subject matter, also including introductory clinical material integral to the third year clerkship/clinical rotation years (e.g., basic history and physical examination, doctor-patient communication and the medical interview, professionalism, ethics and medical jurisprudence, etc.).

The COMAT-Foundations Committee is currently being formed and will be comprised of DOs and other medical educators (PhDs, EdDs, etc.), principally from the colleges of osteopathic medicine, who can represent the various foundational medical science disciplines (e.g., anatomy, biochemistry, OPP) important in the introductory years of the osteopathic medical school curriculum, at the appropriate level. Those interested in becoming part of the COMAT-Foundations Committee should contact NBOME Vice President for Cognitive Testing, Dr. Linjun Shen, at lshen@nbome.org.
Distinguished Speakers Address NBOME’s Innovations in Testing Advisory Committee

The NBOME’s Innovations in Testing Advisory Committee (ITAC) stimulating and productive meeting in December at the NBOME’s Executive Offices in Philadelphia featured two esteemed guest speakers. Geoff Norman, PhD, and Seven Ommen, MD, addressed a number of topics relevant not only to the Committee, but also to NBOME’s Blue Ribbon Panel efforts aimed at enhancing COMLEX-USA.

Dr. Norman, Assistant Dean, Programme for Educational Research and Development at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, presented a paper which contrasted high- and low-fidelity simulation for assessment purposes. He emphasized that low-fidelity simulation can often be as effective as high-fidelity simulation, and at a much reduced cost.

Dr. Ommen, Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, provided an overview of the Mayo Expert system. The system enables Mayo Clinic professionals to optimize patient care by providing streamlined access to pertinent Mayo-vetted medical knowledge and Mayo expertise at the point-of-care, while seamlessly documenting physician competencies necessary for continuous professional development.

The ITAC is responsible to review emerging technologies and innovations in testing that might enhance COMLEX-USA examinations and other NBOME products, or other operations of the organization. The ITAC is composed of members who represent a broad range of constituencies, including more than half dozen colleges of osteopathic medicine.

NBOME Hires Melissa Turner, Senior Quality & Patient Safety Officer

Melissa Turner, MS recently joined the NBOME’s Innovations in Testing Department as Senior Quality & Patient Safety Officer. She is based at NBOME’s National Center for Clinical Skills Testing in Philadelphia.

Turner will focus on supporting patient safety initiatives at the NBOME, including ongoing efforts to develop a patient safety risk assessment form as well as other projects focused on integrating aspects of patient safety in all levels of COMLEX-USA. She will also be responsible for developing and implementing an integrated strategic plan for organizational improvement, working in conjunction with NBOME President & CEO, Dr. John Gimpel.

Turner, a Malvern, PA resident, has more than 20 years of leadership experience in healthcare in the areas of quality, patient safety and healthcare operations. Most recently she served as the Vice President of Quality Improvement & Patient Safety for Lincoln County Healthcare, a member of MaineHealth, the largest integrated health system in Maine. She is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University with a bachelor’s degree in natural science and a master’s degree in public health.

Dr. Joseph Smoley Announces June Departure

Joseph F. Smoley, PhD, has announced he will be leaving his position as Senior Director for Test Development in the Department of Cognitive Testing at the NBOME effective June 30, 2011.

Dr. Smoley’s tenure began in 1985 as the Executive Director of the National Board of Examiners for Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (NBEOPS), which changed its name to the NBOME shortly thereafter. Subsequently, he became Vice-President for Administration/COO in July, 2002 with the appointment of Dr. Frederick Meoli as NBOME’s first full time physician President/CEO. In 2010, Dr. Smoley took on his current position, focusing on multiple-choice test question item quality and recruitment of item writers.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to Dr. Smoley for 25 years of dedicated service to the NBOME.
NBOME Visits Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine

In the first quarter of 2011, the NBOME completed visits to three colleges of osteopathic medicine, sending teams to Touro University Nevada-College of Osteopathic Medicine (TUCOM), Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences-College of Osteopathic Medicine (OSU-COM), and University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth-Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNTHSC-TCOM).

Each visit included presentations to faculty and administration to provide an overview about the NBOME, COMLEX-USA, and COMAT; faculty development workshops on item-writing for multiple-choice examinations, and an NBOME and COMLEX-USA Update for Medical Students. The visits provided an excellent opportunity for NBOME to engage COM faculty members who wish to join NBOME’s National Faculty as item-writers, committee members, etc., and to answer questions about COMAT. Members of the visiting team from NBOME were President & CEO, John R. Gimpel, D.O., M.Ed.; Vice President for Cognitive Testing, Linjun Shen, Ph.D., M.P.H.; and Senior Director for Cognitive Testing, Joseph Smoley, Ph.D.

Photo compliments of the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine, one of the many COMs where the NBOME has presented to faculty and students.

Send submissions, questions or comments about The Osteopathic Examiner to the Editor:
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