

Council on Certification Update

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As you might imagine, there has been a lot that has needed to be done in this first year of reorganization and the members of the Council have met the challenge by volunteering many hours of their time. We wanted to update you on some of the recent activities.

The Council is working on developing Policies and Procedures and the first draft has been provided to the consultant for review and input. These will be provided to the incoming elected Council for approval next year. As part of that development, the Council approved the mission statement. It is:

The mission of the NCRA Council on Certification shall be to create and maintain credentialing processes whereby the public can be assured that individuals certified by NCRA have met a level of competence required to provide accurate information for cancer surveillance and research activities.

2003 Certification Examinations

The Council updated the Candidates Handbook and posted it on NCRA's website. Due to the numerous inquiries regarding eligibility that the Council has received, the eligibility criteria were reviewed and modified to make them clearer. A statement clarifying the eligibility criteria has also been added to the NCRA website along with "Frequently Asked Questions". It has been established that experience requirements listed are minimums and full time is equivalent to 1950 hours a year. The current approved allied health fields are listed on the website; they are Medicine/Physician, Nursing/ Registered Nurse, Protocol Data Management, Health Information Management, Health Administration, Radiology and Laboratory Technology, Radiation Technology, Public Health, and Physician Assistant. Major decisions on changes to the eligibility criteria will be deferred until completion of the Job Task Analysis and the Council elections have been completed. The Exam Construction committee is chaired by Dan Curran and the members consist of the current Council members. This committee met in New

York City in January at the offices of PTC to review the 2003 CTR examinations.

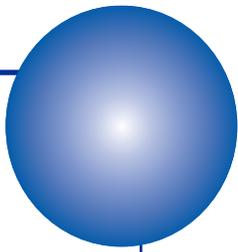
2004 Certification Examinations

In 2004 candidates will be able to take a computer-based examination at more than 600 PTC testing centers around the country. The testing window will cover a 2-3 weeks period.

The 2004 Examinations will be based on the new Commission on Cancer's Facility Oncology Registry Data Standards (FORDS) and AJCC 6th edition. An Item Review Committee is being established by chairperson Dan Curran to review all items in the data bank that relate to these two subjects to update them to the new standards. In addition to the inclusion of these new references, the 2004 examinations will be based on the results of the Job Task Analysis (JTA). Following the completion of this survey, the content outline and the weighting will be reviewed and may be changed based on the findings of the JTA.

The CTR Exam Job Task Analysis Committee is chaired by Pam Fulton and members have been selected to develop a survey tool to identify major areas of practice required to perform the cancer registrar job. A draft survey will be pilot tested and then posted online. All NCRA members and all CTRs will be notified of its availability by email. State Association Presidents will be asked to make all of their members aware of its availability in order to reach those registrars that are not CTRs or NCRA members. Based on the analysis of responses to the JTA, PTC will recommend changes for the CTR Exam, and assess the need for additional levels of certification.

Another change in 2004 will be the inclusion of additional questions on Central Cancer Registry operations. The Council has agreed that the Certification Examination should measure a candidate's ability to work in either of these settings since many CTRs may work in both in the course of their careers. Hospital/facility based procedures and those that apply to both settings will continue to dominate the examination since this still represents the major employer of CTRs. Currently, 10% to 15% of examination candidates come from Central Cancer Registries. The Council is soliciting the submission of these questions to be added to the item data bank with the stipulation that their references must be readily available. If you are willing to submit questions on any subject for the



CTR examination, please contact Dan Curran at dan@ccr.ga.gov or (916) 779-0362.

In the U.S., Cancer Registrars are recognized professionals in the healthcare team and credentialed status as a CTR supports that professionalism. An International CTR Exam Committee, chaired by Katie Golub, CTR, is exploring the feasibility of offering an international CTR examination that would offer an international CTR credential. The members of the committee include Wanda Diaz (c) (Puerto Rico), Mignon Dryden, CTR (USA), April Fritz, RHIT, CTR (USA), Ingrid Friesen (Canada), Elaine Hamlyn, CTR (Canada), and Steven Roffers, PA, CTR (USA).

For many years NCRA has received requests elsewhere to offer a certification examination that would be appropriate for registrars in other countries. There are cancer registries in many countries throughout the world, but there is no other certification similar to the one offered by NCRA. In fact, the International Association of Cancer Registries has members from cancer registries in 121 countries. Cancer Registrars in other countries have expressed a desire to be credentialed as CTRs; however, the current CTR examination is dominated by the U.S. colloquialisms and U.S. abstracting rules and

definitions that may not be the predominant rules and definitions in place in other countries. The committee is recommending that this exam would be a generalized non-country/non-agency specific professional CTR examination applicable to those who are not working in U.S. cancer registries and is as respected as the current CTR examination. The examination content would be very similar to the current U.S. examination. It would be a 250-question test drawn from the current item data bank with the same eligibility criteria and passing score. Differences in this International exam would include the exclusion of questions regarding Commission on Cancer requirements and the inclusion of international multiple primary rules. The committee will be conducting a market analysis and international representatives will be included in the JTA. Additional financial support is being pursued through several avenues.

Questions or comments can be sent to ctrexam@ncra-usa.org.