

National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

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Customer Service

The NBVME office works hard to provide good service to our customers, the examination candidates. This includes providing accurate information, responding promptly to inquiries and concerns, being fair and respectful to everyone, and dealing with problems when they arise. That latter point is relatively easy when it is a problem that we have created, but it is harder when the problem was caused by someone else.

Last month, NBVME members were pleased to have the opportunity to interact with a senior representative from Prometric, the company that delivers the NAVLE to candidates. The NBVME is fortunate to be able to deal with Prometric through the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). The NBME uses Prometric to deliver its own US Medical Licensing Examination, and examinations for its other clients. The relatively small NAVLE program benefits greatly by using an established and proven test delivery system.

No system is perfect, and a few NAVLE candidates encounter problems with Prometric. Our office tries hard to make everyone happy, but we are not always successful. We investigate and respond to all candidate grievances, and we review candidate feedback reports following each test window. These efforts have improved the test delivery process and reduced the number of serious problems. We are now collecting additional feedback through questionnaires sent to over 800 candidates in January with the fall score reports. We will summarize responses from the questionnaires in a future issue of the *National Board Report*.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

January NBVME Meeting Report

The NBVME began its January 2007 meeting in Orlando with an all-day strategic planning session on January 11. Mr. Michael Barrett of Resonance, LLC facilitated the session, assisted by his wife, Andrea Pagano. Joining the board for the planning session were five invited guests: Drs. John Albers, Michael Paul, Thomas Vaughan, and Gary Stamp, and Mr. Owen McCafferty.

In preparation for the meeting, Mr. Barrett interviewed each board member by telephone. During the strategic planning session, participants reviewed and updated the NBVME's vision, mission, and values statements, and identified four strategic objectives for the coming three years. Three of the objectives (continuous improvement, organization effectiveness, and financial stability) were continued from the previous strategic plan. Outreach was added as a new objective. Participants identified and prioritized critical initiatives to be addressed under each of the objectives. In the coming months, the board will work to implement the action items identified in the strategic planning session.

January 12 was devoted to the NBVME's business meeting, chaired by Dr. Mike Thomas of Indianapolis, IN. Here are some highlights of actions taken:

NAVLE® retake policy

In January 2005, the board approved a policy recommending that licensing boards limit NAVLE candidates to a total of five attempts to pass the examination in a five year period, with each of the final two attempts at least one year from the previous attempt. The effective date for the policy was fall 2005. As the attempt limit began to take effect, it generated timing concerns associated with the implementation of the new ECFVG step 3 examination later this year. In addition, some licensing boards have not been able to modify

laws or rules to allow them to comply with the NBVME's recommended attempt limit. After considering input from the AAVSB and the ECFVG on this issue, the board voted to change the effective date for implementation of the retake policy to fall 2007. The change means that NAVLE attempts made by candidates prior to fall 2007 will not count toward the five attempt limit. Candidates who took and failed the NAVLE in fall 2005, spring 2006, and fall 2006 will be able to take the examination again in April 2007, the last time the NAVLE will be used as the ECFVG step 3 requirement. Licensing boards and the ECFVG were notified of the policy change on January 23.

NAVLE use in Canada

The board approved a request from the Canadian National Examining Board (NEB) to allow the NAVLE to continue to be used as part of the NEB's certification program for graduates of non-accredited colleges through April 2008. It was understood that this approval was for Canada only, and that foreign graduates approved by this mechanism in Canada may not be eligible for licensure in the United States, because they would not meet the NAVLE eligibility requirements in the US. Beginning this fall, US foreign graduates will have to pass the ECFVG or PAVE step 3 examination before they can be approved by licensing boards to take the NAVLE.

Practice NAVLE

The board authorized the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to proceed with plans to develop and deliver two web-based 180-item practice versions of the NAVLE. The examinations should be available in September.

Species specific examinations

The board approved a recommendation to review and update

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January Meeting

(continued from page 1)

the two species specific examinations in 2007. The NBVME provides these examinations (companion animal and equine) to licensing boards for use in disciplinary cases and for other purposes.

Bylaws

As noted in previous issues of the *National Board Report*, the board has for two years been considering amendments to its bylaws. At the January meeting, all of the proposed amendments were approved, including amendments dealing with appointment and removal of members, terms and duties of officers, creation of a Nominating Committee, appointment of members to the Examination Development Advisory Board, removal of outdated language, and changing the NBVME's fiscal year to July 1 - June 30. Copies of the new bylaws are available from the NBVME office upon request.

Future meetings

The board will meet during the April 11-12 NAVLE form review meeting in Philadelphia, in July during the Canadian VMA convention in Ottawa (including a joint meeting with the Canadian NEB), and in San Antonio in January 2008.



Andrea Pagano and Michael Barrett

From the Past: State Board Questions

Number 23 in a Series

Here are some more questions from the Materia Medica chapter of the 1917 book, *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers* by V.G. Kimball.

Questions

1. Name three acid tonics.
2. Mention six diuretics.
3. What is mustard? State its uses in medicine.
4. State the physiologic effects, uses, and dose of ether.
5. What is (a) a tonic, (b) an alterative? Give an example of each.

Answers

1. Phosphoric acid, hydrochloric acid, and nitric acid.
2. Potassium nitrate, spirits nitrous ether, F.E. digitalis, potassium citrate, potassium acetate, and balsam copaiba.
3. Commercial mustard is a powder obtained from *Sinapis alba semina* and *Sinapis nigra semina*, which produce white and black mustard respectively. It is an irritant or counterirritant, rubefacient, vesicant,

or suppurant, according to the manner in which it is used. Used internally as an emetic for dogs and pigs. Externally, it is used as a counterirritant in laryngitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, colic, enteritis, peritonitis, etc.

4. Ether is anodyne, antispasmodic, diaphoretic, anthelmintic; a cardiac, respiratory, and cerebral stimulant, an anaesthetic and a general diffusible stimulant. Used in flatulency, spasmodic colic, intestinal worms, and as a general anaesthetic in surgery. Small doses are stimulant to the heart and nervous system and are useful in collapse, exhaustion, etc.

5. (a) A tonic is a drug which produces a permanent, though scarcely perceptible, excitement of all the vital functions. Example, iron. (b) An alterative is a drug which alters the process of nutrition and excretion and restores the normal functions of an organ or of the system; e.g., iodide of potassium.

Next issue: more Material Medica

Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment

The NBVME administered the third Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) at Cedar Valley College in Dallas on January 5-6, 2007. Eight candidates participated, including four candidates from the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) and four reference candidates. The use of reference candidates (who were 2006 graduates of two different accredited veterinary schools) helps ensure the validity of the examination,

and aids in establishing a passing standard.

The January administration involved 16 examiners, five standardized clients, six support staff, two NBVME staff, and two observers.

Following the administration, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed the evaluation forms and established a passing standard. Three of the four PAVE candidates passed.

The next VCSA is being planned for late August.

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The purpose of the *National Board Report* is to educate, to inform, and to communicate information about the objectives and programs of the NBVME. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinions, views, or policies of the NBVME or any of its members, unless expressly so stated.

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2007 NAVLE and QE Item Writers Named

Each year, the NBVME invites content experts to serve as NAVLE and QE item writers. The NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board has primary responsibility for identifying NAVLE item writers. QE item writers are selected by NBVME staff, with input from NBVME members and present and former item writers.

Experienced item writers are encouraged to serve at least two or three years if they wish, but the NBVME believes that it is important to involve new individuals in the item writing process each year.

New NAVLE item writers for 2007 include Drs. Tatjana Mirkovic and Maria Fahie (canine); John August and Susan Little (feline); David VanMetre and Daryl Nydam (bovine); Eric Gingrich (poultry); Karen Lehe (swine); Adam Langer (public health);

and Peter Conlon (professional behavior, communications, and practice management). These individuals will join 16 returning NAVLE item writers to write and review questions to be used for the first time on forms of the NAVLE administered in the 2008-09 testing cycle.

New QE item writers for 2007 include Drs. Anton Hoffman (anatomy), Paul Davenport and Abdelfattah Nour (physiology), Ron Johnson (pharmacology), Susan Little (parasitology), Jon Patterson, (pathology), and Elizabeth Spangler (clinical pathology). These individuals will work with returning QE item writers Drs. Marc Ratzlaff (anatomy), Thomas Caceci (histology), Lynne Kushner (pharmacology), Jean Whichard (bacteriology), Tom Phillips (virology), and Gayle Johnson

(pathology) to write and review new QE items.

New NAVLE and QE item writers will participate in an item writing workshop at the offices of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in Philadelphia on March 1. During the workshop, participants receive training in item writing techniques from NBME staff and then have the opportunity to write some items and review them as a group. Following the workshop, all item writers will be given specific item writing assignments. Most NAVLE and QE item writers are asked to write and submit 50 items in their content area(s).

Forms of the QE to be administered in September 2007 and January and May 2008 will be reviewed and approved by all fourteen 2007 QE item writers on March 2.

Hopkins Honored with NBVME Award

At the January meeting, Dr. Al Hopkins received the 2007 NBVME Award. Dr. Hopkins is the eighth recipient of the award, created in 1999 to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the NBVME and its examination programs.

A native of Dallas, Texas, and a graduate of Texas A&M University, Dr. Hopkins opened his first practice in Dallas in 1957. In 1964, he established the Highland Park Animal Clinic, where he worked until he sold the practice in 1997 and retired.

Dr. Hopkins has a long and distinguished career in organized veterinary medicine, beginning with the office of president of the Dallas County Veterinary Medical Association in 1969, and including service as president of the Texas Veterinary Medical Association (1976), Alternate Delegate to the AVMA House of Delegates (1977-1979), member of the AVMA Executive Board (1979-1985), Chairman of the Board (1984-85), and AVMA President (1986-87).

In 1989, Dr. Hopkins was appointed to the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners. He

was elected to the Executive Committee of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) in 1990. Dr. Hopkins was responsible for the successful implementation of the AAVSB's Disciplinary Database, which allows licensing boards to know if licensure applicants or licensees have had any disciplinary actions taken against them in another jurisdiction. Charlotte Ronan, former AAVSB Executive Director, has stated that without the leadership of Dr. Hopkins, the Disciplinary Database probably would not exist.

The AAVSB appointed Dr. Hopkins to the National Board Examination Committee (NBEC) in 1994, and reappointed him to subsequent three year terms in 1997 and 2000. Dr. Hopkins played a key role in the incorporation of the NBEC as an independent not-for-profit corporation. He was also active in the development of the NBVME's species specific examinations, and in the development of the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment.

Dr. Hopkins and his wife, Bobbie, live in north Dallas. They have three children, all graduates of

Texas A&M, and seven grandchildren.

In his remarks on receiving the award, Dr. Hopkins credited Dr. Nancy Collins for encouraging him to become involved in the national licensing examination program.

Previous award recipients have included Drs. Duane Albrecht, Sam Strahm, Richard Hawe, Billy Hooper, Melvin Swenson, George Wadley, and Susan McDonough.



Dr. Al Hopkins receives the NBVME Award from NBVME Chair Dr. Mike Thomas.

NAVLE and QE Stats

NAVLE

A total of 3,804 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 13 - December 9, 2006 testing window. This exceeded last fall's record number by about 300 candidates. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 22-23.

The fall 2006 candidate population included 2,760 criterion candidates, 244 non-criterion candidates, and 800 foreign-trained candidates. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

In mid-January, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed the performance of the fall candidates, and approved a passing standard for the 2006-07 examinations. The passing rate for fall 2006 criterion candidates was 90%, compared to 88% for the same group for the fall 2005 examination. At press time, the

NBVME office has submitted 1,259 candidate eligibility records for the April 9-21, 2007 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 65 PAVE candidates on January 18, 2007. The examination was offered in Grenada and St. Kitts, at nine sites in the US, and in Guam. Scores were reported to the AAVSB on February 22. The passing rate for the 56 first time test takers was 76.8%, which is similar to the passing rate for previous administrations.

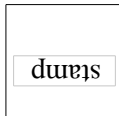
A total of 108 third year students at Iowa State University also took the QE in January. Iowa State is the second accredited school to use the examination; Western University has administered it in May 2005 and 2006.

The next QE administration is scheduled for May 10.

2007-08 NAVLE Letter Agreements

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2007-2008 NAVLE testing cycle will be mailed to boards in March. The NAVLE fee will increase from \$465 to \$480. The testing windows will be November 12 - December 8, 2007 and April 7-19, 2008. The application deadlines will remain the same. The Agreements will include revised language on NAVLE candidate eligibility criteria as summarized in the article on page 1, and an expanded section on test security.

Mailing Label



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