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# THE SENTINEL

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## President's Message

### Teresa Jarrett, CTR

I want to congratulate those of you who became new parents and grandparents over the last year. I wish everyone who has been ill or had surgery a speedy recovery and to those who have lost loved ones, my sympathy is with you.

So much has gone on since I last wrote to you. I want to congratulate the new CTR's. Way to go!! They are: Tim Catalano, Deborah Centner, Deborah Poovey, Teresa Rahal and Cher Stone-Bustle.

I traveled to the TRIAD (Three State Advisory Committee for the Southeast Division of the American Cancer Society) meeting in Columbia in November. I was able to communicate with representatives from Georgia and South Carolina's Cancer Registrars groups. A subcommittee was appointed to discuss a possible regional registrar meeting. This group has not yet met.

The Program Committee for the Spring Meeting in Asheville is working to make it a very educational meeting. Look for

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## The CTR Exam-Where do they get those Questions?

### Cathy Rimmer, BA, Mdiv, CTR

I was recently appointed to the National Board for Certification of Registrars and attended my first Board Meeting November 2-3 in Chicago at the offices of the American College of Surgeons. One thing I discovered quickly is that the NBCR does a lot of work. At this meeting we reviewed the exams for March and September 2001. There are initially 300 questions per test reviewed and the tests are narrowed down to the final 250 that get published. The discarded questions either go back into the data bank for future tests or get deleted permanently if they are no longer relevant. Questions submitted for CE credit which get accepted to into the data bank.

As we review the tests, we look for duplicate questions, incorrect answers, the content area the question has been assigned to, the difficulty level (based on percent of persons who got the question right on the last exam) and make a judgement of whether this is information a registrar with 2 years of experience should know. There was much discussion at times concerning specific questions. It was difficult also at times to choose which questions to eliminate from the exam. A staff member from the Professional Testing Corporation was present to guide us and make changes on the master copy.

The Board also reviews the content areas of the exam and the percentage of questions assigned to each section. The dates for the exam and fees are set by the Board. The passing score threshold is reviewed and set for the coming year (it has not changed). The "Handbook for Candidates" is reviewed and revised for publication.

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your brochures soon. Dates for the meeting are April 5-6.

Carol Hahn Johnson, President of NCRA is a very active president and believes in keeping the membership informed. Her letter to the membership is printed in this newsletter.

The Annual Meeting of NCRA is in Orlando in May. It has been suggested that each state make a basket. Basket is used loosely to mean anything that will hold your stuff. They want NC things for the basket. No, not cigarettes. Products made in NC, such as socks, ham, pottery, etc. If you have a special item that you would like to put in this "basket" please send or bring it to the spring meeting. I will be putting the basket together and taking it to Orlando.

Musings...I do my best thinking when I am driving. Do you do that? When Carol called me last week and said it was time to do the next article; I started thinking about it on my way home from work one afternoon. Do you realize how much we talk in shorthand? Ever wonder what others think when they hear us talk about ANCCR, NCRA, TRIAD, CTR, HEM/ONC, FUP, NACCR, SEER, The College, AJCC, CA, ASAP? We definitely have our own language don't we? So the next time you are talking to someone make sure that they know your shorthand. Do you remember when tumor boards (cancer conferences) were discussions of one or two cases by one physician? Now we are audiovisual specialists too. One week at tumor board we had 2 laptops, a slide projector, an LCD projector, a video microscope, and the x-ray telemate machine hooked up in the front of the room. Plus nearly everyone had laser pointers. Oh, for the good ole days, when chalk and blackboard were enough.

Well so much for my musings...see you at the Spring Meeting.

**NCRA News**  
**Inez Evans, RHIT, CTR**  
**NCRA Annual Meeting**  
 May 22-25, 2001 in Orlando, FL at the Disney Hilton

**ANCCR Fall Meeting Winston-Salem, NC**

September 12-14, 2001

Contact: Inez Evans (336) 716-3223, [ievans@wfubmc.edu](mailto:ievans@wfubmc.edu)

**MEMBERSHIP**

Patricia West, RHIT, CTR

Welcome to all of our New Members!! ANCCR is delighted to have you on the team! Your membership runs from Sept. 30, 2000 to Sept. 30, 2001. I will be mailing out the renewal dues letters in August, but you can also renew your membership at the fall meeting in Winston-Salem. There is a \$5 late fee for renewing after Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. I look forward to meeting our new members and seeing the old members at the spring meeting in Asheville. If anyone has any questions please contact me at 919-966-2607 or by e-mail at [pwest@unch.unc.edu](mailto:pwest@unch.unc.edu)

**SPRING MEETING-ASHEVILLE NCApril 5-6, 2001**

**Holiday Inn Sun Spree Resort**

**One Holiday Inn Drive**

**Asheville, NC**

Room Rates: \$85-145 (6% tax not included)

Room includes: coffee maker, refrigerator, computer port

Amenities: 18 hole golf course, 4 clay tennis courts, 2 outdoor pools, restaurant, spa

Reservations need to be made by 3-5-01

Contact: Teresa Jarrett or Deborah Carrethers

**CTR EXAM SCHEDULES**

**DATE APPLICATION DEADLINE**

March 10, 2001 February 1, 2001

September 15, 2001 August 1, 2001

**NEW HORIZONS ONCOLOGY CONFERENCE**

March 23 and 24, 2001 at High Point Country Club at Emorywood

Registration fees (must be received by 3-19-01): \$45.00 per person-includes dinner and materials. The fee for students and employees of High Point Regional Health System is \$15.00 For more information contact: Elizabeth Tucker (336)-878-6703

[etucker@hprhs.com](mailto:etucker@hprhs.com)

## ANCCR EXECUTIVE BOARD

**PRESIDENT**-TERESA JARRETT, CTR

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT**-  
ELIZABETH MULLIS, RHIT, CTR

**VICE PRESIDENT**-DEBORAH  
CARRUTHERS, CTR

**SECRETARY**-SHEILA WALKER, LPN

**TREASURER**-MELANIE ROGAN, CTR

**WAYS AND MEANS**-GLORIA REGAN, CTR

**GRANTS AND VENDORS**-DEBORAH THORNE,  
CTR

**NEW REGISTRAR TRAINING**-LINDA  
MULVIHILL, RHIT, CTR

**HISTORIAN AND ACCCC LIAISON**-JUDY  
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**BYLAWS**-DENISE DYSON, CTR

**NOMINATING**-BLANCHE SELLERS, CTR

**MEMBERSHIP**-PATRICIA WEST, CTR

**PUBLICATIONS**-CAROL BURKE, CTR

**WEB SITE COORDINATOR**-CATHY RIMMER, BA,  
MDiv, CTR

**NCRA LIAISON**-ELIZABETH MULLIS, RHIT, CTR

**CENTRAL CANCER REGISTRY LIAISON**-CAROL  
DICKINSON, RN, CTR

**EDUCATION**-INEZ EVANS, RHIT, CTR

Please contact the appropriate member of the Executive Board with any questions or concerns that you may have.

The Professional Testing Corporation provides detailed statistical reports for the Board concerning the candidates sitting for exams. We reviewed information broken down by state, educational level, caseload size, race, age, eligibility routes, and other variables to detect trends and patterns for NCRA to direct educational efforts in order to increase passing rates. The roles of NBCR and NCRA: NBCR is responsible for testing and NCRA is responsible for education.

There is an Item Development sub-committee that creates new questions and reviews questions submitted by registrars for CE credit. It meets separately and reports to the Board. A member of the PTC works also with this group.

The NBCR has a challenging role ahead. The exam in 2002 will be incorporating changes in surgery codes, ICDO-3, new edition of SEER Summary Stage (this was news to me), and other possible changes to ROADS. The Board is comprised of registrars with a variety of backgrounds (new CTR's, experienced CTR's, Central Registry staff, small and large hospital registrars) to give a balanced point of view.

If you have issues or concerns about the CTR exam, please contact me at (336) 718-0270 or e-mail:

[ccrimmer@novanthealth.org](mailto:ccrimmer@novanthealth.org).

### **LETTER TO NCRA MEMBERSHIP FROM CAROL HAHN JOHNSON, PRESIDENT**

This was originally sent to NCRA members via e-mail on 1-12-01.

NCRA Members

One of the promises I made during my inaugural speech was that I would keep the membership informed of all financial and business matters. I believe that NCRA exists to serve the needs of the membership and that goal cannot be met until we do a better job of communicating. I also believe that the first step in improving communication is to have an informed membership, and that means that it is the responsibility of the President to communicate all-important decisions that affect the membership in a timely manner.

The Board of Directors has voted to move the organization into self-management. On Sunday, January 15, 2001 advertisements for an Executive Director will appear in trade publications, and on the NCRA website.

First, let me explain how and why this decision was made. Then I will explain the structure of the management.

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The 1999-2000 Board of Directors authorized the Request for Proposals (RFP) Committee after the Board voted to do an RFP for management rather than negotiating the present contract with Applied Management Professionals. The Board felt that an RFP would allow NCRA to specify those services necessary to improve the performance of NCRA as an organization. I was appointed as Chair of the committee and asked Linda Mulvihill, President-Elect; Ryan Intelkofer, Vice President; and Mary Potts, Treasurer to serve as committee members. The first months were an analysis of NCRA's history and needs.

- We discussed our history; NCRA has had four management firms
- We reviewed the existing contract and the only RFP available to us, published five years ago
- We marked and agreed upon those areas that needed to be revised to meet current and future organizational needs

Next we did a financial analysis. For those of you who are not familiar with cost accounting, that means we look at all sources of income and project our income for the next three years. We then looked at our expenses for the next five years. Items reviewed and analyzed were:

- Projected membership dues based on our growth pattern for the past five years
- Projected income based on our Annual Meeting profits for the past five years

We interviewed and consulted with two professional consultants, one of whom specialized in helping hire management firms and another who specialized in moving organizations into self-management, including hiring executive directors and other staff. We interviewed two executive directors of comparable non-profit organizations and one staff member of a much larger non-profit organization. We reviewed all of the information from the storage facility regarding the recruitment and hiring of management staff in the past.

Based on the financial needs and the information gathered, the RFP committee recommended to the BOD that NCRA move to self-management and provided documentation, based upon the research, projecting that self-management would not cost more than a management company. We would have a full-time executive director whose various duties would include, but not be limited to writing grants and fundraising.

The professional search consultant expects to have an executive director on board by March 15. This would give the executive director time to visit the AMP facility to learn about the membership and CE duties of the executive office and to attend the Annual Meeting. In those two and a half months, he/she will also set up the office and recruit an administrative assistant.

We will start with those two employees. AMP has documented that the financial portion of the contract equals one FTE, but we will outsource that service. AMP also documented an FTE for answering telephones, but the executive suite office option provides operators for each tenant. Those operators answer the telephone with NCRA's name and handle all orders and requests (in the same manner as the AMP operators handle routine requests). Any other requests will be forwarded to the office personnel.

I will keep you informed on the progress of the search, the interview process, the hiring and information on the Executive Director.

NCRA is moving forward into new territory, but following in the steps of sister organizations such as AHIMA and NAACCR.

## **WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**

If anyone has any items that they would be willing to bring to the spring meeting in Asheville for a "White Elephant" sale, please bring or send them to the meeting. If your item does not sell, you must take it back with you. Also, if you have any items that you would be willing to donate for the raffle, please contact Gloria Regan, CTR at (919) 715-4562.

## **ICDO AND SEER SUMMARY STAGING CHANGES**

**DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE THAT YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO SHARE?**

Send your thoughts or ideas to Carol Burke, Sentinel Editor  
715 Fleming St, Hendersonville, NC 28791  
[carol.burke@pardee-med.org](mailto:carol.burke@pardee-med.org)

