

Address contributions for *CHP News* and “CHP Corner” to:

Editor

Kyle Kleinhans, CHP
Work: 865-576-4170
Fax: 865-574-5037
Email: kk2@bechteljacobs.org

Associate Editor

Harry Anagnostopoulos, CHP
Work: 314-770-3059
Fax: 314-770-3067
Email: harold.w.anagnostopoulos@saic.com

ABHP Annual Activities 2005

Mary Birch, ABHP Chair

The American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) held two meetings in 2005—the summer meeting at the annual Health Physics Society meeting and a November meeting in McLean, Virginia. The Panel of Examiners held the Part II question workshop at the midyear Health Physics Society meeting and the Part I question workshop in McLean, Virginia, following the ABHP meeting.

2005 Examination

The Part I and II exams were successfully administered with 133 candidates sitting for the Part I examination and 75 candidates sitting for the Part II examination. The Part II exam had a passing rate of 20 percent and, as a result, the Board has certified 16 new CHPs, including one candidate who had previously passed the Part II exam. The 20 percent pass rate for the Part II exam was the lowest pass rate since the 1995 exam of 19 percent. The 2005 exam had a much higher proportion of calculational problems than in recent years. Efforts are under way to limit the number of calculational problems. The Part I exam had a passing rate of 56 percent, up from a passing rate of 33 percent the previous year.

10 CFR 35 Changes and Board Actions

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has recently made changes in its regulations regarding medical licenses for byproduct material. Until October 2005, the NRC accepted ABHP certification as evidence of fundamental knowledge required to be a radiation safety officer (RSO) listed under a 10 CFR Part 35 license. The NRC staff, in response to a petition for rulemaking regarding another portion of the

training requirements, developed detailed requirements for a certifying body to be listed. Unfortunately, even though the NRC clearly based its requirements for an RSO on the existing requirements for ABHP certification, the requirements were modified slightly with the effect that the ABHP could not assure that all of its CHPs would meet the new requirements, although we did not know this when the requirements came to our attention in July 2005. The ABHP submitted an application to be recognized as a certifying body under 10 CFR 35 in August 2005. The application was essentially identical to the application that the ABHP submitted and that the NRC accepted to be listed as a certifying body in the earlier version of 10 CFR Part 35.

The NRC subsequently contacted the ABHP regarding four perceived “deficiencies” in our application. Two of the deficiencies related to the content of examinations and were easily closed. The other two problems were not as easily addressed. One issue involved the educational requirements to take the exam and these requirements were revised as a result of a special ABHP and AAHP meeting in September. The requirements now state:

“As a minimum, the applicant must submit evidence (for example, official college transcripts or certified translations of official transcripts) of earning a bachelor’s or graduate degree from an accredited college or university in physical science or engineering or in a biological science with a minimum of 20 semester hours in physical science.”

The new academic requirements go into effect with the 2006 examination applications, however, there were a number of candidates who had already passed one part of the exam and not yet been certified. As an exam part is good for seven years, it was possible that without confirmation from a review of the files, it would be 2013 before we could assure the NRC that everyone met its requirements. Files of all candidates in this group were reviewed and all the candidates met the NRC academic requirements. The Board finally sent a letter to the NRC indicating that our application review found no candidates who were approved for 2006 or in process for potential future certification who did not meet NRC requirements. As for prior certifications, the letter stated the Board's rationale that all prior certifications were adequate as a measure of fitness for being an RSO. Needless to say, the NRC did not accept this argument and has listed the ABHP as meeting the RSO training requirements from 2006 onward.

Canadian Radiation Protection Association

The Canadian Radiation Protection Association

(CRPA) has shown increasing interest in the certification process used by the ABHP. It currently has a process for technician-level personnel and has decided to gather more information to help decide if it should expand to the professional level. Two representatives from the CRPA met with the Board chair in Spokane to discuss the ABHP process. Representatives were invited to and attended the fall Board meeting and the Part I Panel workshop in November. Ongoing interactions were planned with attendance at the Part II Panel workshop in January.

Passing Point Workshop Planned

The last passing point workshop for the Part I exam was held in 2003. In accordance with the Policy Manual, a Passing Point Determination should be done at least once every three years. 2006 Part I Panel Past Chair George MacDurmon is planning on organizing a Passing Point Workshop at the annual HPS meeting in Providence. This is a good opportunity to get continuing education credits by participating.

Part I Examination Panel

George MacDurmon, Chair

The Part I Exam Panel is appointed by the American Board of Health Physics (ABHP) and is given the responsibility for producing Part I of the certification exam for health physicists. Due to the comprehensive nature of the ABHP certification, the panel is comprised of members representing the numerous fields in which health physicists work.

The Part I Exam Panel meets for two days each November near Washington, DC. The process of generating the Part I exam begins with a review of the previous year's exam. Panel members evaluate each question, along with new questions that have been submitted for consideration, and make determinations regarding the questions that will be removed or added to the exam. The first draft of the examination is prepared by the end of the two-day session.

Although most of the work by panel members is completed during the annual meeting, tasks are assigned throughout the year as necessary. These tasks

may include such things as editing the final version of the exam, reviewing question solutions, and updating questions from the question bank. Members are appointed to the panel for a four-year term.

Participation in the Part I Examination Panel is quite rewarding. The efforts of panel members bear immediate fruit in the production of the exam. In addition, the insights and expertise of fellow panel members are quite valuable. Despite the hard work, panel members enjoy a collegial atmosphere along with the pleasure of making a significant contribution to our profession. If you are a CHP and interested in participating in the Part I Examination Panel, please indicate your interest when you submit your ABHP annual dues.

The 2005 Part I Panel Members are Chair George MacDurmon, Vice Chair Joe Greco, and members Kevin Doody, Rob Forrest, Jerry Hensley, Beth Hilt, Mike Hinz, Tony Huffert, Vicky Morris, Linda Sewell, Scottie Walker, and Jim Winstanley. 