



NOCA News  
July 2008—Summer Edition

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### **NOCA Hosts Legislative Summit in DC**

The National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA) held its first annual *Legislative Summit: Workforce Solutions from the Certification Community* on Wednesday, May 7, 2008 on Capitol Hill.

NOCA volunteer leaders and NOCA staff gathered in the House Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing room to host an educational event for policymakers and their staff. Elected officials and their policy staff stopped in to learn about NOCA, the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the importance of program accreditation and the value that occupational certification brings to America's workforce. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Labor, and the U.S. Army and Navy's Credentialing Opportunities OnLine (COOL) programs were also on hand to demonstrate their programs. "The NOCA leadership was honored to have the participation of Army/Navy COOL and DOL at our educational event on Capitol Hill," said NOCA Board President Cyndi Miller Murphy. "It was a great opportunity for our organizations to come together in educating elected officials on the value of certification."

After this successful educational event, NOCA's volunteer leadership then attended meetings in Senate and House offices to discuss certification issues. The visits also provided an opportunity to advocate for the passage of the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act, a bill introduced by Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) designed to update veterans' benefits to allow veterans to put their Montgomery G.I. benefits towards the costs associated with earning an occupational certification. This legislation has since been passed, and signed by the President. NOCA's leadership also advocated for S. 2794, a bill introduced by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) designed to crack down on persons using fraudulent or misleading financial advisor credentials.

NOCA continues to work towards gaining more cosponsors for S. 2794, the Senior Investor Protection Act. The Senior Investor Protection Act would direct the Attorney General to establish a program of grants to states to investigate and prosecute misleading and fraudulent marketing practices or develop educational materials and training aimed at reducing misleading and fraudulent marketing of financial products toward seniors. The measure also recommends that

states adopt the North American Securities Administrators Association's (NASAA) Model Rule on the Use of Senior-Specific Certifications and Professional Designations for determining whether a designation being used is misleading. NOCA supports this recommendation.



*NOCA volunteer leaders pose during the NOCA Capitol Hill education event with representatives of Army/Navy COOL and the Department of Labor.*



*Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) speaks with NOCA Executive Director Jim Kendzel, Government Relations Director Frank Moore and Board President Cyndi Miller Murphy during NOCA's Capitol Hill education event.*

## **Assessing the Future**

By: Dave Meissner, Prometric

While we often think of tests as a relatively recent creation, perhaps the result of the industrial revolution, the notion of testing dates back nearly to the dawn of civilization. Those early tests measured practical skills and abilities and were often used as, what we in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would consider, pre-employment and placement exams. With the advent of a more diversified workforce came the introduction of guilds (associations) and apprenticeships that tightly coupled training and assessment into a structured delivery model. Role delineation in the military, public education and the explosion of specialized professions early in the last century all contributed to the rapid adoption of highly standardized multiple-choice exams. Multiple choice tests proved to be highly reliable, easily delivered and nearly universal in their applicability. And they remain so.

Fast forward to today...an increasingly global economy where people sometimes misrepresent themselves on resumes and in job interviews, falsifying or exaggerating their skills and abilities to gain a competitive edge. Couple this with the high degree of variability that exists in the quality of our education system, and you have an environment that exposes new vulnerabilities for credentialing agencies and society at large. It is little wonder then, that test sponsors are seeking greater confidence in their certification and licensure decisions. That search has focused on the concept of performance-based testing – measurement of an individual's ability to demonstrate specific skills and/or to perform a series of assigned tasks. While hands-on practical exams, in which candidates are evaluated in the workplace, have been administered for centuries, today's test sponsors need a delivery model that leverages the consistency, security and automation made possible with several emerging technologies.

Early adopters of performance-based testing have learned several important lessons that are worth consideration. Performance-based items are far more expensive and time-consuming to develop than their knowledge-based counterparts and while a single multiple-choice item might contribute to several test objectives, the individual tasks within a performance-based activity are typically much more narrowly defined. As a consequence, performance-based items are not as efficient from an item bank perspective. Also, because these activities are generally more time-consuming, fewer are administered within a test and they are therefore more memorable than traditional item types – raising item exposure and performance drift concerns.

Does all of this mean that performance-based testing is impractical for all but a few large, well-funded testing programs? Not at all! The answer lies in taking a holistic view toward what needs to be accomplished. The solution for many organizations is hybrid testing that leverages both performance-based scenarios and traditional objective test content to provide a more comprehensive gauge of a candidate's true knowledge, skills and abilities. Not only does this approach preserve your organization's existing item bank investment, it also substantially reduces the cost and level of effort associated with a move toward performance measurement.

The future of testing has arrived and a combination of innovative technology and a holistic view of the knowledge, skills and abilities required to measure competency will take us into the next generation of assessments. It's reassuring to know that the fundamentals that we've all come to rely on are truly universal and continue to stand the test of time.

## **Save the Date for NOCA's 2008 Annual Educational Conference!**

*Spanning the Credentialing Industry - Education. Innovation. Advocacy.*  
**Hyatt Regency at Embarcadero Center**  
**San Francisco, CA**  
**November 19-22, 2008**

The NOCA Annual Educational Conference is quickly approaching and staff and our Program Committee have been busy planning what is sure to be another successful conference! Last year's pre-conference sessions received tremendous feedback and we're really putting forth extra effort this year to make them even more valuable. This year, we will have four Pre-Conference Workshops, two of which will be full-day sessions. Many members have approached us with a desire to bring their board members to the Annual Conference but not sure there was enough content geared toward them. In response to this demand, we are pleased to present the full day session *Building Great Governance for Certifying Organizations*. This is an ideal opportunity for you and your Chief Elected/Chief Staff Officers to learn leadership skills and network with leaders of other Certifying Agencies.

Last year, we were pleased to introduce Certification 101, which was attended by those new to certification or those looking to move up in their career. As a result, we are bringing it back this year as a morning workshop and introducing Certification 201 (NEW!) in the afternoon. If you attended 101 last year, you won't want to miss 201!

Additionally, we have two afternoon workshops scheduled: *Marketing/Media Workshop* and *NCCA Success Stories Workshop*. All of these programs are still in development but we'll keep you updated with speakers, workshop specifics and times!

For all information Conference related, please [click here](#).

## **President and Executive Director's Message**

We hope all of you are enjoying your summer. Summer represents a time for vacations, relaxation and of course those wonderful lazy day picnics. It also reminds us that we are half way through the year and it is time to evaluate where we are based on our annual work plan and our strategy. We are pleased to say that the first half of 2008 has been an exciting time for NOCA and we have experienced significant success in key areas.

As the leader in serving the credentialing industry, NOCA is committed to providing services and advocacy efforts that support, improve, and grow our profession. To maintain and enhance our leadership position, it is critical that we continually look for new and better ways to serve our members and the industry as a whole. Several new initiatives have been implemented that have further solidified our current and future leadership. .

The Board of Directors is pleased that NOCA accomplished its goal of becoming accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) as a voluntary consensus standards developer. One of the key elements of our mission is to provide standards for the industry. We have accomplished this goal over our 30 year history with great success. However, as we grow and as our members become more diverse and more global it was important for us to invest time and money in pursuing the third-party recognition by ANSI of our standards development process. ANSI accreditation provides verification that the NOCA standards process is open, balanced, transparent and provides adequate due process. In addition, ANSI accreditation confirms that NOCA's standards process meets the minimum requirements specified by federal regulation for federal agency representatives to participate in the process as well as referencing NOCA standards in federal regulation. We are interested in hearing from you on potential areas that NOCA may consider developing American National Standards.

We are already experiencing success in our first American National Standards project for the development of standards for Assessment Based Certificate Programs. The NOCA Standards Committee for Assessment Based Certificate Programs has been working hard and is very close to reaching consensus on a draft standard that will be available for public review and comment. The process has brought together educators, trainers, certification organizations and government representatives to develop the standard. NOCA is proud to provide the forum for all of these

interests to come together to develop a true consensus standard as well as build bridges of understanding between all of the stakeholders, something that has never before been achieved in the world of credentialing.

In addition to standards, NOCA is committed to expanding and investing in the industry research. As many of you know, we created a Research and Development Committee in 2007 and we are beginning to see the fruits of the Committee's labors in 2008. Based on a recommendation from the Committee, the NOCA Board was pleased to approve co-sponsoring with the National Board for Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) a research study on best practices in recertification programs. Recertification is a critical element that distinguishes certification from other forms of competency assurance. Results of the study will be presented at the NOCA annual conference held November 19 -22 in San Francisco, CA.

Another milestone project underway is that NOCA has brought together key organizations in the credentialing industry to help plan a Credentialing Leadership Forum to be held in Washington, D.C. on September 10, 2008. The NOCA Credentialing Leadership Forum is the first of its kind and will bring together leaders in our industry to discuss issues and concerns impacting our industry and develop strategic initiatives designed to help our industry grow and provide ongoing quality services. Space is limited for the Forum so be sure to reserve your spot as soon as possible.

We think you will agree that NOCA is working hard to ensure long-term success for the organization, its members and the entire credentialing industry. So, you can relax, enjoy the summer and be sure to enjoy those lazy day picnics!

## **The Washington Report**

### **NOCA Government Relations Report – July 2008**

The federal election season has already heated up to the boiling point. In addition to electing a new president in 2008, 35 U.S. Senators and all 435 Members of the U.S. House of Representatives will have their names on the ballot.

U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) has cemented his position as the Republican nominee for president. After one of the most watched and contested primaries in history, Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) triumphed over Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) to become the presumptive Democratic nominee for the presidency. Now that each party's primary is over, McCain and Obama are now free to focus on the general election in November and on finding running mates.

Democrats are bullish on their chances for increasing their numbers in Congress as well as having a good shot at taking the White House. The GOP has 25 open seats in the House and five open seats in the Senate to hold. Democrats feel they have excellent opportunities to take all of the open Senate seats and pick up several seats from vulnerable incumbents in Alaska, Minnesota, and New Hampshire. The GOP is eyeing pickups in the Senate in Louisiana and South Dakota and is hoping to knock-off first term Democrats who won in Republican-leaning districts in 2006.

With the focus on the elections, work on legislation involving occupational certifications is moving slowly. Senior Hill staff indicates that the Workforce Investment Act will not likely be reauthorized in 2008.

The Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act was passed as part of the emergency war supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 2642, and was signed by President Bush on June 30, 2008. The legislation, previously S. 22, is the most sweeping expansion of educational and training benefits available to veterans since the G.I. Bill following World War II. The bill was introduced by Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) in January of 2007. The new \$63 billion provision makes veterans who have served since September 11, 2001 eligible for \$90,000 in tuition funding, nearly twice as much as the previous maximum of \$48,000. The funding provides for 36 months of full in-state tuition, a monthly housing stipend, fees for enrollment into a public college, and \$1,000 annually for books and supplies.

NOCA was instrumental in lobbying for the 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act's passage.

There is also interest in the House in updating Montgomery G.I. benefits. The House Veterans Affairs Committee has held several hearings on the issue. NOCA has submitted hearing testimony and met with senior Hill staff on this issue and continues to emphasize the need to promote the certification benefit more widely. There also appears to be interest in perhaps expanding the benefit to include payment for preparatory courses for credentialing exams.

## **NCCA Report**

### **NCCA Policy Updates**

In a continuous effort to improve service to accreditation applicants, the Commission recently approved several new policies regarding Standards interpretations and deferral review procedures. The first policy approved relates to the interpretation of Standards for which the NCCA receives specific requests for clarification. These official interpretations are meant to provide clarity on the intent of the NCCA Standards and will be available to the public at [www.noca.org/ncca](http://www.noca.org/ncca).

Additionally, the Commission also approved a new procedure for expediting the review of applicants who are in a deferral status. Recognizing that many organizations wish to receive an accreditation decision quickly if their application has been deferred, the Commission has developed a process whereby applicants' deferral responses can be reviewed and addressed more efficiently, thus improving service and aiding organizations in successfully achieving accreditation of their certification programs.

Download the...

- [Standards Interpretation Policy](#)
- [Interpretation of Standard 2, Essential Element B](#)
- [Procedure for Review of Certification Program Deferral Responses](#)

### **Recent Accreditation Activity**

The Commission met several times this Spring to review several new program applications. The number of applications continues to grow, and the Commissioners worked hard to carefully review each one, resulting in new accreditations for several certification programs. Congratulations to the following programs for successful accreditation of their programs. For a full list of NCCA accredited programs, please visit [www.noca.org/ncca/](http://www.noca.org/ncca/).

### **Newly Accredited Programs**

National Exercise and Sports Trainers Association

- Certified Personal Fitness Trainer

American Board of Registration for EEG and EP Technologists

- Certification in Neurophysiologic Intraoperative Monitoring

Human Resource Certification Institute

- Professional in Human Resources
- Senior Professional in Human Resources
- Global Professional in Human Resources

Institute for the Certification of Pharmacy Technicians

- Certified Pharmacy Technician

National Association of Certified Valuation Analysts

- Accredited Valuation Analyst
- Certified Valuation Analyst

National Association of Medical Staff Services

- Certified Provider Credentialing Specialist
- Certified Professional Medical Services Management

National Commission for Health Education Credentialing

- Certified Health Education Specialist Exam

### **Program Renewals**

American Medical Technologists

- Medical Technologist
- Medical Laboratory Technician
- Registered Phlebotomy Technician
- Registered Medical Assistant
- Certified Medical Administrative Specialist
- Registered Dental Assistant
- Certified Office Laboratory Technician

The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists

- Nuclear Medicine Technology
- Radiography
- Sonography
- Radiation Therapy
- Registered Radiologic Assistant \* This is a newly accredited program.

Certification Board for Sterile Processing and Distribution

- Certified Sterile Processing Distribution Manager
- Certified Sterile Processing Distribution Supervisor
- Certified Sterile Processing Distribution Technician

National Board for Certified Counselors

- Master Addictions Counselor
- National Certified Counselor

National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification

- Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist

National Registry for Emergency Medical Technicians

- EMT-Basic
- EMT-Paramedic

## Member News

**National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO)** is in the process of adding to its established programs for crane operators by building a psychometrically-sound certification program for signalpersons. Most exciting is the new, scenario-based practical exam administered via a computer-projector medium. The NCCCO Signalperson Certification program will be ready by third quarter 2008.

NOCA Welcomes the following new members:

- Academy of Applied Personal Training Education
- Cheryl Nogan
- American Phlebotomy Association
- American Academy of Personal Training
- National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology
- FiTour
- Oasis Certification & Competency Board
- American Board of Audiology
- Rita Hoover
- IEEE
- Anthony T. Barrata
- Sally Westlake
- The Lash Association for Safety and Health
- Human Resources Professionals Association

## Sustaining Member in the Spotlight



P • E • S

### Wisdom in Credentialing

Since 1941, Professional Examination Service (PES) has provided a full range of assessment and advisory services to organizations across a broad range of professions, in support of professional licensure and certification, training, and continuing professional education. As a mission-driven, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the public welfare and enhancing the provision of services by credentialed practitioners, PES specializes in the delivery of products and services that meet the unique needs of each client.

### Looking for Guidance?

Starting a new credential, enhancing an existing one, or simply keeping pace with industry standards requires both expertise and experience. Innovative thinking, broad exposure to credentialing issues and effective use of technology are critical to your program's success.

**Let PES Show You the Way!**

PES's approach to credentialing is shaped by decades of service to organizations across a wide range of professions representing sectors such as health care, financial services, engineering, education, management, manufacturing, and security.

## **PES Offers the Following Services:**

### Strategic and Consulting Services

- Policy planning
- Program marketing
- Credentialing information management
- Value proposition analysis
- Stakeholder analysis
- Third party accreditation

### ***Feasibility Studies***

- New program creation
- Transition to computer-based testing
- Development of specialty and/or advanced credentials

### ***Studies of Professional and Occupational Practice***

- Practice/job analysis
- Development of test specifications

### ***Examination Development***

- Remote item writing and examination assembly
- Item bank development and validation
- Standard setting

### ***Psychometric Consulting***

- Psychometric "Boot Camps"
- Bias and fairness reviews
- Reliability studies

### ***Examination Administration***

- Web- and paper-based application processing
- Computer- and paper-based test administration
- Printing and production

### ***Scoring and Statistical Services***

- Item analysis and test equating
- Score verification services
- Data forensics

### ***Program Innovation and Enhancement***

- Practical examinations
- Innovative assessment types
- Recertification initiatives
- Self-assessments for continuing competency
- Test adaptation for different cultures and languages
- Web- and paper-based practice tests
- Training outcomes assessments

### ***Program Evaluation***

- Readiness for accreditation studies

- Program audits and evaluations
- Validation studies

### ***Program Management***

- Management services
- Credentialing information management systems
- Customer Service

## **Why Settle for Less?**

PES's rich experience and breadth/depth of knowledge are unparalleled in the credentialing community. We draw on that experience and knowledge to guide our clients in the development and maintenance of world-class credentialing and assessment programs.

## **Contact PES Today!**

To learn more about PES, please visit our website at [www.proexam.org](http://www.proexam.org), or contact Kenneth Doucet, Vice President for Business Development at [kdoucet@proexam.org](mailto:kdoucet@proexam.org) or by phone at 212-367-4235.

## **Other News**

### **Important Information for Non-Profits! Recent Changes to Form 990**

In December 2007, the Internal Revenue Service made several changes to Form 990, an annual "informational return" filed by nonprofit organizations. The redesign of Form 990 is based on three guiding principles:

- Enhancing transparency to provide the IRS and the public with a realistic picture of the organization;
- Promoting compliance by accurately reflecting the organization's operations so the IRS may efficiently assess the risk of noncompliance; and
- Minimizing the burden on filing organizations.

The IRS is anticipating that this form will be used for filing of organizations 2008 tax returns which means all non-profits must be compliant by December 31, 2008. For more information, please visit: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=171216,00.html>.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Credentialing Leadership Forum**

NOCA is planning a credentialing leadership forum on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the ANCC Headquarters in Silver Spring, MD. The intent of the meeting is to identify key issues impacting the credentialing industry and develop strategic initiatives to address these issues. This event is designed specifically for Presidents/CEOs, Executive Directors, Board Directors and Regulatory representatives. The success of this event rests solely on the shoulders of those that attend. It is NOCA's hope that the discussions held will provide the foundation for ongoing strategic

discussions and defined objectives that will ensure the continued growth and success of our industry. The Forum is open to both NOCA members and non-members. Leaders representing all industry sectors are welcome – the greater the diversity we have, the greater the chance for success.

Dr. Les Wallace, co-author of *A Legacy of 21st Century Leadership*, will be the key note speaker. Dr. Wallace is recognized for tracking business environment and workplace trends and their impact upon business and government.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, there will be no registration fee for attending the Forum. In return for free admission, you will be able to hear a leader in business trends and leadership, network with your peers from across many industry and regulatory sectors and have direct input into developing a strategic direction for the credentialing industry.

Space is limited and registrations will be accepted on a first come first served basis. **To reserve your spot, please [click here](#).** Lunch will be provided. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at 202-367-1165 or email [info@noca.org](mailto:info@noca.org).

Other organizations involved in helping to bring this event together include:

American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS)

Association of Test Publishers (ATP)

ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership (ASAE)

Certification Networking Group (CNG)

Citizen Advocacy Center (CAC)

Performance Testing Council (PTC)

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American Board of Nursing Specialties

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for this important event, please [click here](#) for further information!

**Save the Date!**  
**2009 National Roundtable on Lawyer Specialty Certification**  
**March 19-21, 2009**  
The Mulberry Inn  
601 East Bay St.  
Savannah, GA 31401  
877-468-1200



Get up-to-date information from the experts, network with those working in the legal specialization field, and much more!

Room reservations can be made by phone calling toll-free at 877-468-1200, the hotel directly at 912-238-1200 or online with the **block code: ABA** at <http://www.savannahhotel.com/>. The room block closes February 20, 2009, so please make all reservations by that date to receive the special ABA room rate of \$189.00 for a standard king.

Registration for the meeting will open later this year, so please save the date now! Also, please check the ABA Legal Specialization website for updates at <http://www.LegalSpecialists.org>.