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October 2011

Deans and Directors of
New Jersey RN and LPN Programs

Re: **USE OF COMMERCIALLY PREPARED EXIT EXAMINATIONS**

Dear Program Administrators:

It has come to the attention of the New Jersey Board of Nursing (the "Board") that many nursing programs are requiring successful passage of certain predictor tests, known as "exit examinations," as an additional requirement or criterion for certification to the Board for eligibility to sit for the licensing examination. Students' failure to successfully pass these examinations results in the program's refusal to certify to the Board those students' eligibility to sit for the respective national licensing examination, either NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN.

The Board has considered this issue as well as the programs' utilization and implementation of commercially prepared exit examinations. The Board has concluded that these exams are best utilized to determine the overall effectiveness of a nursing program's curriculum, which is prepared and revised as necessary, by its faculty. As you are aware, the faculty of a nursing program is charged, among other responsibilities, with the development, implementation, evaluation and revision of a program's curriculum.

The Board finds that the purpose of exit examinations is to identify for faculty members specific areas of deficiencies in the curriculum and provide a blueprint for the faculty to revise the curriculum as necessary. Additionally, the Board finds that the results of these tests identify for individual students their specific areas of weakness so that they may adequately focus their attention on these areas in their preparation for the NCLEX examination.

Therefore, it is the position of the Board that commercially and/or faculty prepared exit examinations should be

used as diagnostic tools that are utilized to assess curriculum strengths and weaknesses as well as individual students' educational strengths and weaknesses, and **not** as **a sole** criterion or artificial bar to graduation and/or eligibility to sit for the national licensing examination.

Additionally, the Board finds that performance results on exit examinations can also be utilized in the determination of a final course grade. However, if external tests are used in this fashion by a nursing program, the Board concludes that the examination should count for no more than **10** percent of the final course grade.

The Board is therefore requesting that all programs immediately review utilization of these examinations and comply with the Board's directives in this matter.

Sincerely,



George J. Hebert, MA, RN
Executive Director