

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRIEFS

# SPECIAL EDITION!

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#### PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTRAY OF CERTIFIED MEDICAL EXAMINERS

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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH  
2005-2006:

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President, ACA Council on Occupational Health

#### AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT, DAVID THORPE, DC, DACBOH

#### FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSED REGISTRY OF CERTIFIED MEDICAL EXAMINERS

David Thorpe, DC, DACBOH, Fayetteville, NY, owns and operates WorkRite Safety serving employers throughout New York. (<http://www.workritesafety.com>).

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*The ACA Council on Occupational Health is working to ensure that all Chiropractors are included in the FMCSA's proposed national registry. New training and certification would be required for performing Dept. of Transportation (DOT) Physical Examinations. Read for details...*

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Under the leadership of Dr. Bruce Hansbrough, the Executive Committee of the ACA's Council on Occupational Health (ACACOH) is working diligently with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) toward ensuring that Doctors of Chiropractic are included in the proposed National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (NRCME). Dr. Hansbrough, our Immediate Past President, the Executive Committee, and DCs throughout the nation who perform physical examinations for Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) operators (drivers) regulated by Department of Transportation (DOT) have been quick to realize that the opportunity for our profession is phenomenal – and important. We'll work alongside the FMCSA supporting its efforts to establish the a National Registry by being involved in formatting its soon to be required certification training and to secure Chiropractic's role in the continuation of being considered qualified health personnel for performing DOT physical examinations.

The proposed National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (NRCME) will be a directory of medical examiners who fully understand the medical standards in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Regulations and how they relate to the mental and physical demands of operating a commercial motor vehicle. Medical Examiners to be listed in the NRCME directory will have successfully completed required training and a certification examination.

The FMCSA is a separate administration of the DOT governing medical qualification standards and requirements for commercial motor vehicle (CMV) operators. The purpose of the proposed registry relates to the concern of the FMCSA that many medical examiners performing examinations do not thoroughly understand the physical and psychological demands associated with driving a commercial motor vehicle. A standardized training and examination process for medical examiners who perform DOT physical examinations will help the FMCSA maintain its mission to improve the safety of our nation's roadways. ►

As your Council President I've made a specific request to Dr. Lenny Saulter, President of the American Chiropractic Board of Occupational Health (ACBOH), regarding making such required training and certification examination an available educational program for Diplomate re-certification.

Council Secretary, Dr. Chad Henriksen expresses that this proposed registry along with the FMCSA's requirement for new training can be a great motivating reason for the specialty of chiropractic occupational health and applied ergonomics to hold an annual convention.

It has been estimated by the FMCSA that 50,000 doctors will be needed initially. It is my opinion that the NRCME will have difficulty initially filling all 50,000 spots, yet chiropractic alone could fill as many as 20,000 slots very quickly across the country. We can anticipate that other professions as MDs, DOs, Physicians Assistants, and Advanced Nurse Practitioners will want to fill as many slots as possible too. There is a tremendous opportunity here!

Our profession's dollars and opportunities like other health care professions at-large are *squeezed* by managed care. The frustrations I hear from my brother and sister chiropractors nationwide are abundant. Working in occupational health (of which providing these exams is only one of the many services we are reimbursed for within this specialty) provides the DC with another avenue to utilize their degree to perform other needed services and receive reimbursement. The beauty of performing DOT services (physical exams, drug and alcohol testing and screening) is that it isn't managed care, it does not bear the hassle of insurance paperwork, and the services are mandated requirements by the DOT for the working public it regulates.

What has transpired over the past few months as a result of our developmental meetings held across the country is that we have an opportunity. We will have participation on the WORKING INTEGRATED PRODUCT TEAM (WIPT) and Dr. Bruce Hansbrough and myself have submitted applications to participate on the Medical Review Board (*Dr. Hansbrough was specifically requested to participate*), a previously all-medical entity.

Sincerely,  
David Thorpe, DC, DACBOH  
President, ACACOH

To learn more, please visit the FMCSA web site at [http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/about\\_faqs.aspx#5](http://nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/about_faqs.aspx#5)

### **Why is the proposed National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners necessary?**

Over the past 20 years (1982-2002), the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) estimates a 42% increase in registered large trucks and a 93% increase in miles traveled by large trucks. There are approximately 7 million registered large trucks and 700,000 commercial buses, 11 million commercial drivers' license holders, and an estimated 662,000 interstate truck and bus companies. These statistics reflect a significant increase in the presence of large trucks on our Nation's highways.

There is also evidence that improper medical certification has contributed directly to crashes. The National Transportation Safety Board, for example, has documented cases where drivers with serious disqualifying medical conditions were involved in significant fatal and injury crashes. Reports from FMCSA field staff indicate numerous problems on our roads, where drivers who have disqualifying medical conditions are operating commercial motor vehicles. These issues indicate there is a need to improve the medical certification process, and the National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners is one strategy for addressing this problem.

Interest in certifying medical examiners to evaluate interstate commercial motor vehicle drivers dates back to at least 1978 when the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration commissioned a feasibility study on the issue. This study addressed the primary weakness in the overall system – the lack of medical examiner understanding of the relationship of driver health to the task of operating commercial motor vehicles interstate. The study concluded that there were not enough medical examiners to support a certified medical examiner system for all interstate commercial driver examinations.

The idea of having a National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners has been raised periodically by the government since that time. In August 2005, Public Law 109-59, The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was enacted. Section 4116 requires, "The Secretary, acting through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration - (1) shall establish and maintain a current national registry of medical examiners who are qualified to perform examinations and issue medical certificates; (2) shall remove from the registry the name of any medical examiner that fails to meet or maintain the qualifications established by the Secretary for being listed in the registry or otherwise does not meet the requirements of this section or regulation issued under this section; (3) shall accept as valid only medical certificates issued by persons on the national registry of medical examiners; and (4) may make participation of medical examiners in the national registry voluntary if such a change will enhance the safety of operators of commercial motor vehicles." (Source: FMCSA web.)

## ADDING DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT) SERVICES TO YOUR MENU FOR EMPLOYERS

By David Thorpe, DC, DACBOH

Here's a paradigm shift for you! Adding DOT services as drug and alcohol testing and screening and DOT physical examinations to your repertoire of services can literally open doors for you to become the "Doctor of Choice" for the many health care and federally mandated services employers need.

In the past two years, the International Academy of Chiropractic Occupational Health Consultants (IACOHC) has provided educational programs for DCs and for their staff to become highly trained to perform DOT services. Drug and alcohol testing and screening require specific training and demonstration of proficiency as set forth by the DOT. The DOT currently determines that Chiropractors are already qualified to perform DOT physical examinations (but you see that in the near future – *see article above* – that this will change). The ACACOH has been fortunate to be able to support what the IACOHC is doing in many ways and we will continue to do so. We have direct access to eminently qualified speakers and programs that are making the national circuit right now, equipping this profession to perform DOT drug and alcohol services.

The result? DCs across the nation are responding and have already added DOT services to their menu for employers – and what we are finding is that one service truly leads to another! Not only can you have a one-stop-shop for DOT services but when employers learn about your other occ-health specialty services your practice will grow, expand, change, and surely become more visible in your community! In our country, decisions are made annually concerning insurance benefits and chiropractic inclusion. Who's the consumer driving the market? The employer! Demonstrating our effectiveness and expanding our services will undoubtedly lead to greater inclusion.

Please join the ACACOH (visit [www.ACACOH.com](http://www.ACACOH.com) for an application) and start to pursue training in this specialty. The Diplomate program started this Autumn at Northwestern Health Sciences University. Specifically, there will be a 12 hour program in December relating to performing DOT examinations, and certification in drug and alcohol testing. Call Northwestern for more information. Get involved today. Expand your practice opportunities, and enjoy working as a chiropractor without the frustration of managed care.

## FMCSA SEEKS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTRY OF CERTIFIED MEDICAL EXAMINERS

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is seeking medical professionals from the 5 groups authorized by the agency to perform medical examinations (Advanced Practice Nurses, Doctors of Chiropractic, Doctors of Osteopathy, Medical Doctors, and Physician Assistants) to assist in the development of the proposed National Registry of Certified Medical Examiners (NRCME) program. Once established, the NRCME will provide a list of certified medical examiners available to examine interstate truck and motor coach drivers and effectively determine their physical qualifications to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMV). Medical examiners will be required to complete training and pass a certification test to be listed on the NRCME.

The goal of training, testing and certification is to ensure medical examiners understand the physical and mental demands of driving a CMV and to ensure they perform medical examinations with full awareness of the conditions under which drivers work.

The FMCSA has commissioned a study to ensure the training and certification test are relevant to the FMCSA medical examiner's job and include the tasks necessary to perform a thorough medical examination of CMV drivers. **Participation from Doctors of Chiropractic and the other authorized medical groups is needed to accomplish these goals.**

**There are two main areas where participation is needed:**

1. Development and maintenance of the curriculum guidelines. This may include serving on subcommittees or participating in training program content review.
2. Development and maintenance of the certification test. This may include serving on subcommittees or item writing for the test.

If you are interested in contributing your time and expertise to the development of the proposed NRCME program, please send an email to the "Contact NRCME" option on the NRCME Web site at <http://www.nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/contact.aspx>. Please include the following info:

(next page)

Name:

Profession:

Mailing Address:

Telephone(s):

Preferred email address:

Your primary area of interest:

- Certification Test
- Curriculum Guidelines

More information on the NRCME program can be found on @ <http://www.nrcme.fmcsa.dot.gov/>.

## **HELP BRING TRAINING TO YOUR STATE CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERS!**

Weekend programs are available for your region to get DCs, CAs and other clinical staff trained per the Department of Transportation (DOT) training requirements and per the DOT's certification requirements for performing DOT **Drug Testing** and DOT **Alcohol Screening**. These are two services that your clinic can very easily incorporate with other clinical services.

Many readers will have positive working relationships or professional influence with their state chiropractic association's Staff, and/or Board or Educational director(s). Your support is needed to get the program on the docket for this next year as an educational program. **If you are interested, or if you think you can help – please contact Elizabeth L. Auppl at (507) 455-1025** or by email at [eauppl@charterinternet.com](mailto:eauppl@charterinternet.com)

Many across the nation have become trained and certified – many more will be in these next few months. The Council has access to *the best* educational program available for you and your colleagues and staff.

## **POSTGRADUATE CHIROPRACTIC OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & APPLIED ERGONOMICS PROGRAM: NORTHWESTERN HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY**

The postgraduate offering – Chiropractic Occupational Health & Applied Ergonomics – has begun on campus at Northwestern Health Sciences University, Bloomington, MN.

The schedules is as follows:

### **Oct 15-16, 2005: The Role of Chiropractic In Occupational Health**

Current statistics show that most of the injuries that occur on the job involve the neuromusculoskeletal system. Who knows how to prevent and treat these conditions better than anyone else? You, the chiropractor. Find out how you can translate your chiropractic skills into prevention and improved clinical case management of work and non-work related disorders. Discover how corporations are rapidly expanding a more conservative, prevention-driven approach to workplace health and wellness. *Joseph J. Sweere, DC, DABCO, DACBOH, FICC.*

### **Nov 12-13, 2005: Learn How to Promote Services with an Emphasis on Industrial Relations**

Discover what it takes to create profitable relationships with business and corporate employers. Real world examples and proven techniques will be explored. *Scott Bautch, DC, DACBOH.*

### **Dec 17-18, 2005: DOT Drug Testing and Alcohol Screening Certification and DOT Physical Exams**

You will become certified for official recognition to perform these U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) screenings for your industrial clients and the general public. Discover how quickly and easily you and your staff can add this service to your practice, and how providing one of these services opens the door for delivering a host of services to industrial clients. Learn these skills in a hands-on environment where you will walk through the procedures step by step, completing training requirements and completing Demonstrations of Proficiency (mock collections) in addition to understanding why these service are so important. This session is open to CA's and other clinic staff. *Joseph Sweere, DC, DABCO, DACBOH, FICC; Elizabeth Auppl, CDSP, CSD Trainer; David Thorpe, DC, DACBOH.*

Completing the introductory module is the beginning of the three year Occupational Health and Applied Ergonomics Diplomate program endorsed by the American Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health (ACACOH) and the International Chiropractic Association's Council on Occupational Health (ICACOH). The mission of the ACACOH includes the advancement of the DC through improving education, providing services, public relations, working with government agencies, and encouraging and supporting research - all in an attempt to position the DC as "the" specialist within the area of specialty. Upon successful completion of the diplomate program you will become eligible to apply to sit for the diplomate exam. For further information, please call (952) 888-4777, ext#249 and ask for Jenny or Diana.