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Board Member Questions NCBTMB Election Process

By Editorial Staff

The process whereby certificants elect members of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) Board of Directors (BOD) has been called into question by current board member Elizabeth McIntyre, RN, MAS, NCTMB.

McIntyre, who is in the third year of her first term on the board, submitted her application to the NCBTMB nomination committee to be placed on the ballot for a second term.

A response from the committee stating that she did "not meet the current criteria for consideration" to run prompted McIntyre to issue an open letter to the profession questioning NCBTMB's election practices, since, according to McIntyre, the nomination committee never advised her what the selection criteria were and which criteria she failed to meet.

In her letter, McIntyre stated she was concerned that the election process was not fair or equitable, and that personal differences among various board members were affecting the election process. Among the concerns the letter cited were:

- Before their appointment last summer, the current nomination committee members had never previously served the NCBTMB and their names were never made public;
- The BOD has never developed criteria for prospective board members, nor has it provided the nomination committee with information about the board's needs;
- The nomination committee chair is a "friend and former colleague" of NCBTMB Chair Judy Dean, who also "was selected for the ballot"- a relationship that represents a conflict of interest; and
- It is unusual for an incumbent director to be refused a place on the ballot, which raises ethical questions regarding possible election fixing.

McIntyre also indicated that when she addressed her concerns with the board, each director was instructed not to get involved with the process since it might be perceived as "board fixing and negative."

NCBTMB Chair Judy Dean emphatically denies McIntyre's allegations of election misconduct. "The board is committed to constantly maintaining high standards of ethical behavior and therefore immediately responds to any allegations or actions that question the integrity of NCBTMB or its board members," she said. "No evidence was found to support the allegations brought forth by board member Elizabeth McIntyre, but based on a potential perception of wrongdoing, the board immediately took action to implement a new nomination process that would constructively address the needs of the 2005 election process."

The new election process will include evaluating potential board candidates based on specific criteria and skill sets developed by NCBTMB's Leadership Development Task Force (LDTF). According to Dean, changes to the election process were in the works well before McIntyre's complaint came to light, but the new criteria had not yet been approved and/or implemented.

However, to remedy the current situation and dispel McIntyre's allegations, the NCBTMB appointed a new nomination committee and implemented the new election process with the 2005 elections. This includes reopening the application process to professional certificants or public members desiring a place on the ballot. Candidates who were previously on the slate will also be required to go through the new process, including submitting to a new interview. All candidates will be evaluated based on the new criteria and skill sets identified by the LDTF.

As far as the letter from the former nomination committee that advised McIntyre she did "not meet the current criteria for consideration," it was a form letter, according to Dean, who does concede that the nomination committee "did not explain the rationale behind the decision" not to add McIntyre to the ballot.

Under the new election process, however, "Every candidate will have access to the criteria. It will be published so all certificants/stakeholders are knowledgeable as to the criteria/qualifications, etc., needed for candidate selection. The criteria and process will continually be evaluated by the board to determine its relevancy to the ever-changing needs of the NCBTMB, to the profession and to NCB's stakeholders. This unfortunate situation clearly demonstrates the need for the board to investigate and implement a continuous quality assurance program," Dean concluded.

Massage Today contacted other current board members for their input and was told in all instances that Judy Dean was the only member authorized to field questions; however, several previous board members who wished to remain anonymous expressed their support for the NCBTMB and its election process. "There is always room for improvement, but it is my opinion that the Leadership Development Committee did its job to the best of its ability," said one. Others expressed extreme disappointment at the way McIntyre handled the situation altogether.

Resources:

1. Copy of McIntyre letter, circulated throughout the massage community.
2. E-mail and phone conversation with Judy Dean, chair, NCBTMB.
3. Confidential E-mail from current and previous NCBTMB board members.



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