

**MOA MEMBERS
FROM SUE A. WEINGARTNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
APRIL 23, 2009**

**INDIANA OPPOSING PROPOSED JOINT BOARD
CERTIFICATION TEAM'S PROPOSAL**

April 22, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

On April 17, 2009, the Indiana Optometric Association (IOA) House of Delegates passed a resolution opposing the Joint Board Certification Project Team's (JBCPT's) framework for general board certification (BC) in optometry. What follows is a summary of the major events and factors that formed opinions and ultimately led to the IOA's decision. A copy of the resolution is also attached for your review.

Let me first begin by saying that Indiana has a long history of providing progressive leadership in our profession. Years ago, Indiana was the leader in obtaining the ability to prescribe therapeutic drugs, and today, the vast majority of Indiana delegates support the principle of maintenance of competency (MOC) for optometrists. Yet regrettably, we feel we have no choice but to voice our opposition for the current JBCPT model for the reasons delineated below.

Going back in time, the topic of BC re-emerged at the end of the "Optometry 2020 Conference" in 2006. Shortly thereafter, the JBCTP was formed and began extensive research and dialogue to develop a model of BC. Through most of the development phase, there was very little communication with the stakeholders regarding the developing paradigm. In January 2009, for the first time, details were revealed by the AOA to the profession at large. The IOA immediately launched an extensive campaign to provide unbiased education to its constituents, as well as opportunities for open dialogue and exchange. JBCPT presentations were posted on the IOA website, sent directly to members and website links were widely advertised in newsletters. Publications detailing opposing views were also distributed. Additionally, each of the 12 local IOA societies met between February and April 16, 2009, for the primary purpose of viewing the JBCPT presentations and discussing the proposal.

After careful consideration the IOA members have identified two primary issues. First of all, BC as defined by the JBCPT is not on par with the accredited and accepted models used by medicine. While there are some similarities, it is critically different from BC as understood by other members of the medical community, third party payers and informed members of the general public. Hence the view by some that the JBCPT model represents pseudo board certification, or "board pseudofication". This fundamental flaw prevents the AOA leadership and JBCPT from realizing their stated goal of creating "an attainable, credible and defensible model for board certification in optometry and maintenance of certification," and is the primary basis on which the IOA voices its opposition.

Secondly, the IOA feels that proposals of this magnitude demand responsible deliberation, beginning with the rank and file members. The paucity of information distributed by the JBCPT prior to January 2009, and the continually evolving nature of the proposal, has created a difficult situation. Thanks, however, to intensive efforts by the IOA board of directors, trustees, local society officers and members, I feel confident that the JBCPT proposal, in its initially published format, has been properly vetted by our constituents. While we appreciate the efforts of the AOA and JBCPT to elicit feedback and further refine the proposal, we must reject the AOA's request to empower our delegates to make a final decision pending forthcoming information that may be introduced as late as the House of Delegates in June 2009. Such changes will not allow us or our members to fully study the proposals in a responsible manner. As a matter of principle, our delegates in Washington should not be asked to consider last minute changes that have not been adequately vetted by our members.

It is regrettable that we have been forced into opposition due to the serious flaw in the framework itself and the last minute maneuvering to pass *something* out of the AOA House of Delegates. However, as leaders of Indiana Optometry, we feel that it is a matter of principle that we represent the interests of our membership and ensure that any proposal is developed in a responsible and transparent manner.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Schamerloh, O.D., F.A.A.O.

President

INDIANA OPTOMETRIC ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
April 17, 2009
Resolution 09-01

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING OPTOMETRIC BOARD CERTIFICATION AS
PROPOSED BY THE JOINT BOARD CERTIFICATION PROJECT TEAM**

Whereas, the American Optometric Association (AOA) has endeavored with the American Academy of Optometry (AAO), the Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry (ARBO), the National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO), the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO), and the Optometric Student Association (AOSA) to develop a prototype board certification process for general optometry “to demonstrate continued clinical competence” to the public, third party payers and government agencies;

Whereas, the above-named organizations established the Joint Board Certification Project Team (JBCPT), composed of two representatives of each organization, for the sole purpose of developing for board certification framework for general optometry;

Whereas, the JBCPT unveiled its proposed framework for board certification for general optometry on January 23, 2009 at the AOA Presidents Council in St. Louis, Missouri, and attendees were told that “an up or down vote” would be taken on the proposed framework at Optometry’s Meeting ® in June 2009;

Whereas, JBCPT-produced PowerPoint ® presentations that set forth the JBCPT’s rationale for the need for board certification in optometry and the framework for the proposed board certification process for general optometry were posted on the AOA’s website and were distributed via email to the membership of the Indiana Optometric Association (IOA);

Whereas, the IOA encouraged its membership to view the JBCPT PowerPoint ® presentations and make their views on the proposed framework known to their local societies from which the delegates to the IOA House of Delegates are drawn:

Whereas, each of the twelve local societies of the IOA presented and discussed the JBCPT information during at least one meeting between the dates of January 29, 2009, and April 17, 2009;

Whereas, after hearing from the members of the IOA and after much discussion and careful consideration of the JBCPT’s proposed framework for establishing a board certification process for general optometry, the IOA House of Delegates hereby resolves the following:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Indiana Optometric Association opposes the establishment of the board certification framework for general optometry as proposed by the Joint Board Certification Team.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Indiana Optometric Association urges the House of Delegates of the American Optometric Association to reject the establishment of the board certification framework for general optometry as outlined by the Joint Board Certification Team.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Indiana Optometric Association urges the House of Delegates of the American Optometric Association to reject any effort in 2009 to approve an alternative to the Joint Board Certification Team's board certification framework and that any alternative plan be considered at a subsequent House of Delegates meeting after members and affiliates of the American Optometric Association have had sufficient time to fully consider and vet the alternative proposed framework.