PA CERTIFICATION

William Kohlhepp, MHA, PA-C, NCCPA Immediate Past Chairman
NCCPA Representatives

- Dr. Lee Smith, JD, Chair-Elect
- Janet J. Lathrop, MBA, NCCPA President
- Ragan Cohn, NCCPA Foundation Managing Director
What is NCCPA?

- Founded in 1975
- Independent, not-for-profit organization
- Single national certifying agency for PAs
- PA-C required by all 50 states and US territories for initial licensure
- Governed by a Board of Directors
  - Appointees from 14 medical, educational, and governmental organizations
  - 2 public members
  - 4 PA directors at large
Mission

NCCPA assures that certified PAs meet professional standards of knowledge and skills.
NCCPA will be an essential indicator of PA competence and will utilize a competencies-based approach to refine its certification and recertification programs and to develop new products and services for certified PAs.
A Critical Look at Competence

- IOM report on quality in health care spurred still ongoing discussions of “competence” and “competency assessment” throughout health care
- 2003: NCCPA developed a working definition of PA competencies
- 2004: AAPA, ARC-PA, and PAEA joined with NCCPA in a multi-organizational effort to refine that draft
- 2005: All four national PA organizations endorsed the Competencies document.
- Now: Continuing dialogue to determine what changes need made, if any, to PA education and assessment
Through the exchange of knowledge, expertise and resources with others, NCCPA will continue to enhance the reputation of the organization and the visibility of and appreciation for certified PAs.
Goal #3

- NCCPA will use technology and research to be responsive, innovative and effective in addressing the interests of the public and other stakeholders.
Certification Requirements

- Two-tiered system of certification maintenance focused on evaluation and education
- Initial and recertification exams
  - Exams are developed by committees of item writers (each with at least one physician and 9-11 PAs)
  - All items are pretested.
- 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years
NCCPA’s Examination Program

- Practice analysis
- Content blueprint
- Exam development
  - Example genetics item
- Exam scoring
Practice Analysis

- Method of revising the content of NCCPA’s exams to ensure accurate reflection of PA practice
- Determines current set of knowledge, skills and abilities used by PAs on a regular basis
- Conducted every 5 to 7 years with focus groups and extensive survey research
- Determines the content blueprint or the two dimensions upon which the exam is based.
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<th>%</th>
<th>Knowledge &amp; Skills in:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical Therapeutics</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Formulating Most Likely Diagnosis</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>History Taking &amp; Performing Physical Exams</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Using Lab &amp; Diagnostic Studies</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Clinical Intervention</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Health Maintenance</td>
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<td>Applying Basic Science Concepts</td>
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<td>Cardiovascular System</td>
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<td>Pulmonary System</td>
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<td>Gastrointestinal/Nutritional System</td>
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<td>Musculoskeletal System</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Eye, Ear, Nose &amp; Throat</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Reproductive System</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Neurologic System</td>
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<td>Urinary/Renal System</td>
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## Content Blueprint

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<tr>
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<td>Hematologic System</td>
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<td>Infectious Diseases</td>
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Sample Genetics Information

- Cystic fibrosis
- Wilson's disease
- von Willebrand disease
- Muscular dystrophy
- Huntington's disease
Exam Development

- NCCPA test committee members from a variety of practice specialties and settings write all items.
- Committees review items for style and to validate every aspect of the question.
- Items are then pretested. Statistical analyses determine whether the question should be thrown out, returned to the committee, or made part of the NCCPA item bank.
- Dynamic process allows questions to be continuously reviewed and updated or eliminated.
Which the following patterns is demonstrated on the pedigree shown?

(A) Autosomal-dominant inheritance
(B) Autosomal-recessive inheritance
(C) Mosaicism
(D) Spontaneous mutation
(E) X-linked inheritance
NCCPA uses a content-based standard setting process.

- An absolute standard is established.
- Everyone who meets the standard passes.

Much more sophisticated than norm-referenced standard setting (i.e., the bell-shaped curve)

Examinees receive a detailed report of their performance by each area in the content blueprint.
QUESTIONS?