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Board Conducts

Random Customer Service Surveys

Many thanks for those licensees who returned the customer service surveys!

For the second year the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists distributed approximately 1,000 surveys to a random sampling of its customers to determine satisfaction with Board programs and services.

The customers surveyed include: current licensees, applicants for licensure, applicants who take the written examinations, applicants who take the oral examinations, oral examiners, respondents to complaints, persons who filed complaints, and persons who make open record requests to the Board. The surveys are different for each type of population surveyed. Also, it is important to note that, in this context, consumers are not just members of the public but also licensees and applicants for licensure.

The overall satisfactory rating for these surveys for fiscal year 2001 was 80%. This is an increase from the previous fiscal year which was 73%.

Each individual rating on each survey that is returned, as well as the comments that were provided on the surveys, are reviewed by the Board. This information is used to determine an overall general satisfactory rating, to assess trends, to revise policy, to identify specific difficulties for applicants and to develop new ideas on how to provide services.

Since names are optional, most persons who return the surveys decline to identify themselves. In some instances, however, names are provided with comments. These comments are provided to the Board as well as research on situations indicated by the customer.

In some instances the Board may communicate directly with the customer regarding the comments. Most often, however, the Board uses the information provided by the customer to assist it in general oversight of the agency's programs. Many suggestions cannot be acted upon by the Board because they involve requirements mandated by law or they are prohibited because of insufficient staff resources.

Many licensees believe that renewal fees are too high and that applicants cannot access staff as promptly as they would like. Although the Board does not have ready solutions to these concerns, it does acknowledge them and considers alternatives.

For other concerns, such as the time that it takes to become licensed and to have complaints resolved, the Board has recently made changes which should substantially improve these situations. For instance, approval of applications no longer requires full Board approval at regularly scheduled Board meetings, but instead is provided by the Chair of the Applications Committee on a monthly basis. Even more changes are underway regarding applications. (See article in this newsletter.)

Applicants for the Oral examination request more advance information about this examination. These customers should be satisfied by a recently revised Oral exam brochure.

Regarding the concern for lengthy complaint time resolutions, the Board has recently changed policies to allow staff to finally resolve some types of complaints, as recommended by the State Auditor's office. For example, complaints against licensees of other agencies that do not claim to provide psychological services and complaints against inmates in the criminal justice system which are considered exempt facilities are resolved after staff review, rather than finally resolved by the full Board at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. This in turn saves enforcement staff time to process other types of complaints.

Further suggestions provided through the various surveys include the idea of two-year renewals, a more frequent newsletter, acceptance of credit cards for renewal fees, a requirement for annual CEs in ethics, and more frequent oral examinations. Suggestions for improvements to the website include on-line applications and message boards for e-mail.

The Board is pleased at the high rate of return of the surveys and hopes that licensees who may be randomly polled next year will take the time to return their completed surveys. Additionally, licensees are encouraged to take the time to write a letter to the Board about any specific area of concern. Such letters are reviewed by the full Board at a regularly scheduled meeting and the licensee is provided with a written response.

Applications Approval

Accelerated

In recent months the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists has made changes which will significantly expedite applications for licensure and applications for the Board's Oral

Examination. Most notably, applications for licensure and for the Oral Examination will no longer have to be approved at a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Instead, the Applications Committee of the Board will review applications on a monthly basis and approve applications to take the required examinations, including the Oral Examination.

This change in procedures may save applicants several months in the total amount of time that is required for them to obtain licensure for the various types of licensure.

Additionally, the change to the computerized EPPP and mail-out, open book Jurisprudence Examination has shortened the time frame required for licensure application processing even further.

It is important to note in the licensure process, that the Board does not have control over some steps. For instance, the Board does not control the processing of the scantrons for the EPPP by the Professional Examination Service (PES) once the Board has sent them to this entity.

Also, there may continue to be instances when applications must be held up for discrepancies or for additional information or clarification of information submitted. However, the overall time required to obtain licensure for all applicants has been shortened with the changes that the Board has made.

Governor Appoints Five New Board Members

Catherine Estrada of Dallas is a community volunteer. She is a member of the board of directors of Ronald McDonald House in Dallas and Ronald McDonald Charities of North Texas. Estrada is a former member of the board of directors of the Dallas / Fort Worth Ballet and the Fort Worth Opera. She formerly worked as a personal investor and as an English and history teacher. Estrada received a bachelor's degree in political science from Hampshire College in Amherst and a master's degree in educational administration from Texas Christian University. Her term will expire October 31, 2003.

Mike Nogueira of Corpus Christi is president of First State Bank of Bishop and Corpus Christi. He is a Region 11 board member of the Texas Department of Human Services and a member of the Strategic Directions Advisory Committee of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. He is also a member of the state of Texas Foster Parent Program and the Coastal Bend Youth City Foster Parent Program. Nogueira is a former member of the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners, Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, Texas Bankers Association and the Small Business Administration. His term will expire October 31, 2005.

Dr. Pauline Clansy of Houston is a psychologist and manager of the Psychological Services Department for the Houston Independent School District. She is a member of the American Psychological Association, National Association of Black School Administrators, National Organization for Victims Assistance and the American Red Cross. Clansy is also a member of the Texas Psychological Association, Houston Psychological Association, Houston Association of Black Psychologists and the Houston Association of Black School Administrators. She received a bachelor's degree from Monmouth University in New Jersey, a master's degree from Boston University and a doctorate in education from Ball State University. Her term will expire October 31, 2007.

Dr. Arthur Hernandez of San Antonio is an associate dean in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is a member of the American Educational Research Association, American Public Health Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of School Psychologists. Hernandez is also a member of the National Council on Measurement in Education and the Texas Association of School Psychologists. He received a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University in San Antonio and a doctorate in educational psychology from Texas A&M University. His term will expire October 31, 2007.

Jess Ann Thomason of Midland is a retired community leader in property management, children's healthcare issues and non-profit fundraising. She served with the Midland Cerebral Palsy Center for more than 23 years and was named Distinguished Fund Raiser by the International Fund Raisers of the U.S. Thomason is also a former member of the board of directors of Camp Sweeney, a program for diabetic children. She received a bachelor's degree from Texas Christian University. Her term will expire October 31, 2007.

These appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.