



2023 SELF-ASSESSMENT

Executive Summary: The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards (National Commission) fulfils its responsibilities by administering objective recognition requirements, policies, procedures and criteria for specialty sponsoring organization and specialty certifying board recognition and re-recognition process that reduces real and perceived conflicts of interest, protects the public, nurtures the art and science dentistry and improves patient quality of care.

The National Commission has provided the attached report summarizing the self-assessment process conducted from November 2022-April 2023.

Key Issues: The National Commission's self-assessment affirms the following:

- The National Commission effectively fulfills its *Bylaws* duties through ongoing administration of the specialty sponsoring organization and specialty certifying board recognition and re-recognition process in accordance with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*, established procedures for conducting appeals of adverse recognition actions and the timely submission of reports and budgets to the American Dental Association (ADA) House of Delegates.
- The work of the National Commission is grounded in administration of objective recognition requirements, policies, procedures and criteria that protect the public, nurture the art and science of dentistry and improves patient quality of care.
- Equal representation by general dentist and specialist practitioners on the National Commission Board of Commissioners helps ensure balanced, peer-review processes.
- Through the adoption of Mission, Vision, and Values Statements in 2019 and a Strategic Plan in March 2020 (**Appendices 1 and 2**), the National Commission continues to enhance operations to ensure that the National Commission continues to implement consistent, valid practices that are aligned with Commission best practices.

In summary, the National Commission administers its specialty recognition and re-recognition program in accordance with best practices for agencies with responsibility for developing and implementing recognition standards and criteria that promote and monitor continuous quality improvement in dental specialty recognition.

Background: The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards was established by Res. 30H-2017 (*Trans.* 2017:250) as the ADA agency responsible for developing a process and criteria by which specialty sponsoring organizations and specialty certifying boards are recognized.

In late 2016, The Board of Trustees charged the Task Force on Specialty and Specialty Certifying Board Recognition to evaluate the process and criteria by which specialties and specialty certifying boards are recognized.

The following principles guided the Board and its Task Force in developing the proposal to revise the specialty and specialty certifying board recognition process. The process must:

- be grounded in objective standards that protect the public, nurture the art and science of dentistry, and improve the quality of care;
- serve to reduce potential bias or conflict of interest, or the perception of bias or conflicts of interest, in the decision making process;
- include multiple steps, including provisions for appeal;
- be operationally similar to the Commission on Continuing Education Provider Recognition, Commission on Dental Accreditation and Joint Commission on Dental Examinations;
- include representation from the ADA (general dentists and academics), each of the dental specialties recognized pursuant to the criteria contained in the *ADA Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*, and the public. In addition, opportunities for input from other communities of interest should be incorporated into the process;
- build on the expertise that has been developed by the Council on Dental Education and Licensure and be grounded in the existing *ADA Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National*

Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists. The *ADA Requirements for Recognition* were developed and maintained by the Council on Dental Education and Licensure; they are approved by the ADA House of Delegates; and

- be financially prudent and not place undue financial burden on the ADA of the dental specialty organizations. The National Commission's annual operating budget would be subjected to review by the Board of Trustees and approved by the ADA House of Delegates.

The establishment of the National Commission has reduced real and perceived conflicts of interest in the specialty recognition decision-making process, which is aligned with the recognition processes in other health professions and conforms with the national standards and public expectations on establishing objective processes for applying standards and making high-stakes decisions.

Threshold Issues:

The National Commission is the only body within the American Dental Association (ADA) charged with making decision related to specialty recognition and re-recognition. The *Bylaws* duties of the National Commission, as established by the ADA House of Delegates, is limited in focus and strictly related to the recognition and re-recognition of dental specialty sponsoring organizations and their respective certifying boards based on compliance with the *ADA Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.

ADA Bylaws (Chapter IX, Sec. 30.C) describe the duties of the National Commission as follows:

- a. Formulate and adopt procedures for the recognition of specialties and specialty certifying boards in accord with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialties*.
- b. Grant or deny specialty recognition to specialty organizations and specialty certifying boards seeking recognition in accord with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialties*.
- c. Provide a means for sponsoring organizations and certifying boards to appeal an adverse recognition decision.
- d. Submit an annual report to the House of Delegates of this Association and interim reports on request.
- e. Submit the National Commission's annual budget to the Board of Trustees of the Association.

Since the National Commission's inaugural meeting in May 2018, the Board of Commissioners has worked to develop clear, concise, and transparent policies, procedures and criteria related to specialty and certifying board recognition and re-recognition.

The National Commission's annual goals are based on the National Commissions 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. On an annual basis, the National Commission Strategic Planning and Policy Review Committee and the Board of Commissioners review the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, Action Plan and Dashboard to ensure that the National Commission is meeting its goals and objectives.

Structure:

The focus of the National Commission is on dental specialty sponsoring organization and certifying board recognition and re-recognition, conducting the Periodic Review of Dental Specialty Education and Practice every ten (10) years and reviewing the annual surveys of recognized certifying boards; therefore, the optimal composition of the Board of Commissioners should consist of individuals who are familiar with dental education, dental specialty education and board certification of diplomates.

The composition of the Board of Commissioners as directed by the ADA House of Delegates consists of an equal number of general dentist members as recognized specialty members. When a new specialty is recognized, the composition of the Board of Commissioners increases by two (2) members due to the requirement that there is an equal number of general dentists as specialty members. In 2018, the inaugural Board of Commissioners consisted of

19 members. Due to the recognition of three (3) new specialties, the size of the Board of Commissioners has increased to 25 Commissioners. In March 2022, the Board of Commissioners discussed concerns related to the requirement that there be an equal number of general dentists as recognized specialty members noting that, if in the future, there are more specialties recognized, the size of the Board of Commissioners will be become too large to be efficient and will increase the financial burden on the ADA and recognized specialty sponsoring organizations.

Efficiencies:

The Board of Commissioners is the decision-making body of the National Commission. The National Commission has two (2) Review Committees and four (4) Standing Committees that are advisory to the Board of Commissioners. Since 2018, the National Commission has utilized three (3) ad hoc committees to study specific issues.

The National Commission is focused on being financially prudent and does not want to place an undue financial burden on the ADA or the dental specialty sponsoring organizations. Given this, the Board of Commissioners meets in-person on an annual basis. If a supplemental meeting of the Board of Commissioners is required, the meeting is held virtually. All meetings of the Review and Standing Committees are virtual and the number of Review and Standing Committee meetings is based on the workload of the committee.

As a newer Commission, the Board of Commissioners has spent a large amount of time reviewing and refining policies, procedures and criteria to ensure that what is in place is clear, concise, and transparent. As part of the National Commission Strategic Plan, the Board of Commissioners adopted an Assessment Process Goal that implemented an annual review of the National Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual to develop a rotating schedule to review a set number of policies for potential revision on an annual basis.

The National Commission is supported by one (1) full-time staff. Based on the operational efficiency of staff and the Board of Commissioners, one (1) full-time staff member meets the needs of the National Commission.

Areas of Responsibility:

The National Commission is the only body within the American Dental Association (ADA) charged with making decisions related to specialty recognition and re-recognition. The *Bylaws* duties of the National Commission as established by the ADA House of Delegates is limited in focus and is related to the recognition and re-recognition of dental specialty sponsoring organizations and their respective certifying boards based on compliance with the *ADA Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.

Agenda Review:

The National Commission Board of Commissioners meets on an annual basis. Given this, the Board of Commissioners annual meeting agenda is robust to ensure that the Board of Commissioners takes action on all recommended actions put forward by the National Commission Review and Standing Committees. Prior to the conclusion of its annual meeting, the Board of Commissioners have thoughtful discussions related to emerging trends, future projects and the review of operational efficiencies.

Big Issues and Strategic Direction:

In 2022, the National Commission worked in partnership with the Council on Dental Education and Licensure to revise the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists* to make the requirements more complete, understandable and thorough in an effort to strengthen the specialty recognition process. The proposed revisions to the *Requirements for Recognition* were adopted by the ADA House of Delegates in October 2022.

In March 2020, the National Commission Board of Commissioner adopted its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and has successfully met virtually all of its goals and objectives. In April 2023, the Board of Commissioners held

initial discussions related to what goals and objectives should be included in the 2025-2030 National Commission Strategic Plan.

Prepared by: Catherine Baumann, director, National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards, x2697, baumannca@ada.org

Division SVP: Anthony J. Ziebert, DDS, MS, senior vice president, Education and Professional Affairs, x2712, zieberta@ada.org

National Commission Chair: Brian S. McAllister, DDS

Appendix 1: National Commission Mission, Vision, and Values
Appendix 2: National Commission Strategic Plan

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON RECOGNITION OF DENTAL SPECIALTIES AND CERTIFYING BOARDS**Mission, Vision, and Values Statements****Mission**

The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards serves the public and the profession by providing transparent and objective review of the recognized specialty sponsoring organizations, prospective specialty organizations, their respective certifying boards and their adherence to the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.

Vision

The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards is held to be the standard for excellence and professionalism in the recognition of dental specialties and dental specialty certifying boards.

Values

- Objectivity
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Consistency
- Professionalism

Adopted 3/19; Revised 3/20

**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON RECOGNITION OF DENTAL SPECIALTIES AND
CERTIFYING BOARDS**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

Goal 1: Organizational Capacity Goal: Strong Working Relationships with Communities of Interest

Objective 1. Develop communication plans designed to increase National Commission brand and educate the public/communities of interest on the role of the National Commission.

Action/Metrics:

- Establish a Standing Committee on Communication and Technology by Q2 2020.
- Communication and Technology Committee to draft a communication plan for consideration by the National Commission. Upon adoption, the committee will implement and oversee the plan by Q3 of 2021.
- Hold virtual and/or in-person hearings related to application process and/or educational sessions for communities of interest as are necessary.

Objective 2. Engage and assist the recognized certifying boards in complying with the newly revised *Requirements for Recognition* in order to build value in the Annual Report.

Action/Metrics:

- Develop timelines and policies to allow for achievement of compliance with the revised *Requirements for Recognition* by Q2 of 2020.
- Seek certifying board feedback on the Annual Report by engaging in discussions related to the content of the Annual Report in order to build value in completion of the report by Q2 of 2020.
- Develop a webinar/training session for the August 2020 meeting of the recognized certifying boards for the purpose of improving the quality of report submissions.

Goal 2: Emerging Trends: Monitor Trends in the Oral Health Care Field Focusing on Specialty Recognition

Objective 1. Communicate with other ADA commissions and councils to identify trends and develop innovative solutions to issues affecting the profession.

Action/Metrics:

- Participate in a forum with CODA and CDEL to review emerging trends and common goals and to ensure communication to advance the dental profession by Q1 of 2021.
- Investigate whether there is a need in dentistry for the recognition of other areas of clinical areas of interest (subspecialties) associated with the recognized dental specialties by Q3 2024.

Goal 3: Assessment Process Goal: Improve National Commission Processes

Objective 1. Annual Review of National Commission's Policy and Procedure Manual

Action/Metrics:

- Development of rotating schedule to review a set number of policies for potential revision on an annual basis.

- The Strategic Planning and Policy Review Committee will receive and implement strategies based on an annual review provided by the Chair of each Standing and Review Committees of the Commission.
- Develop formatted document outlining instructions for communities of interest to make comments on open applications, with clear instructions on keeping testimony relevant to criteria.
- Creation of ad hoc committee to develop Code of Conduct and Professionalism

Objective 2. Streamline management of National Commission application, review, billing and reporting processes through technology upgrades.

Action/Metrics:

- Investigate the development and costs of implementing an electronic management software system by Q4 of 2021.

Objective 3. Develop and implement policy regarding the Commission's definition, term of service, nomination and appointment of consultants for Review, Standing and Special Committees based on financial considerations and the emerging needs of the specialty community.

Action/Metrics

- Review associated costs
- Determine criteria for value and appropriateness

Goal 4: Financial Goal: National Commission Investigate Potential Sources of Revenue to Offset Operating Expenses

Objective 1: Development and execution of a shared services agreement with the ADA

Action/Metrics:

- Develop and execute a shared services agreement with the ADA by Q1 of 2020.
- Evaluate allocation formula for shared services paid by the National Commission to the ADA and propose revisions as needed, so that it is reflective of the National Commission and the shared services it receives.

Objective 2. At such time as members are added or removed from the National Commission, the National Commission budget shall be reviewed to determine cost/revenue implications to the National Commission with the understanding that the financial obligations of each specialty group to the National Commission may need to be adjusted.

Objective 3. Investigate additional sources of revenue based on products of value to the community.

Adopted 3/20; Revised 9/20