To: All NBE Accredited Institutes.

Kind Attention: Heads of Institutes/Medical Colleges/Hospitals-Accredited by National Board of Examinations

Subject: Consultative meeting on 9th June 2010 at 10:00 am at National Board of Examinations, New Delhi

Reference: Role of NBE under proposed regulatory changes envisaged by setting up of National Council for Human Resources in Health.

Sir/Madam,

As you may be aware that the Government of India is in the process of undertaking structural changes at macro level, aimed at reforming the current regulatory framework to enhance the supply of skilled personnel in the Health sector. Please refer the enclosed document in this regard.

It is requested that the Head of institute/hospital or its representative may participate in the consultative meeting scheduled to be held on 9th June 2010 (1000 AM to 0130 PM) at Auditorium, NBE office, Sector 9, PSP area, near District Court Dwarka. (Detailed programme and site map given in the enclosed document). The travel and related arrangements may please be made by the concerned institutions on their own; NBE shall not be reimbursing any such expenses or making arrangements for the same.

In case of inability of an institute/hospital to participate, the response may be submitted by email to: acad@natboard.edu.in latest by 1000 AM on the 7th June 2010.

You are requested to kindly confirm the participation of your institute by e-mail to acad@natboard.co.in / Fax to 011- 45593031& 45593009.

Yours sincerely,

(M A K Sood)
Executive Director

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS
(Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
Dated: May 31st, 2010

National Consultation on the role of National Board of Examinations and Proposed Regulatory changes as envisaged by setting up a National Council for Human Resources in Health as an overarching regulatory body by the Government of India

Brief background:

The issue of reforms in the regulatory framework of Medical Education has been under the consideration of the Government of India for some time. The Indian Medical Council act 1956, the Dentists act in 1948 and the Indian Nursing Council act 1947 are the statutory enactments aimed at regulating the professions and the respective education. These councils are multi-constituency & multi-member bodies, various concerns have emerged over the past years in the resultant systems of governance, quality and quantity of Health Human Resources in the country.

The Government of India has also been seized of the matter; various courts of the country have also expressed their viewpoints while dealing with matters pertaining to these councils. The Government of India has been making interventions to strengthen the institutional framework regulating the supply of health human resources. Based on the recommendations of an expert committee in year 1975, the then prime minister Smt. India Gandhi envisaged the setting up of National Board of Examinations, an autonomous organization aimed at establishing high standards of examinations and providing opportunities of training in the field of post graduate medicine. Based on the review of situation post amendments of 1994 and various judicial findings, reforms were attempted in the sector by the proposed amendments to the Indian Medical Council in 2005 by the Government of India.

The National Commission on Macroeconomics and Health established by the Government of India under co-chairmanship of Union Finance and Health Ministers undertook a critical appraisal of the sector.

As per report of the Commission “The Medical Council of India and State Medical Councils as also the Nursing Council of India have failed to carry out the mandate provided to them for regulating the profession and raising the standards of medical education and enforcing them; it is essential that the MCI/NCI Act be amended to allow for civil society representation in the
Council. Besides, the MCI should restrict itself to regulating undergraduate education with the postgraduate education being monitored separately by another body. Similar are the concerns regarding the functioning of the professional councils of the department of AYUSH as well.”

Government of India also set up an expert committee under chairmanship of Prof. Ranjit Roy Chowdhury in 2006 to evaluate the structural changes in the field of Post Graduate Medical Education. The report of the committee (2007) elucidated that:

- At a time when India is on its way to becoming a centre of international health care, the creation of a single body to oversee all postgraduate medical education in the country is imperative.
- The committee after looking into all aspects strongly feels that creation of an independent body is needed to bring about standardization of postgraduate medical education in the country.
- An apex body, the Post Graduate Medical Education Board of India after receiving its statutory powers should be totally responsible for the postgraduate qualifications in the country.
- The vision that is envisaged in either of these alternatives is the creation of a totally independent body - the Post Graduate Medical Education Board of India.

Another committee under the Chairmanship of DGHS Dr A K Mukherjee (1994) recommended that:

“A distinct variation is seen not only from state to state but also from institution to institution. This fact alone speaks for the need of a national level body that can conduct an examination of a uniform nature of high standard. It is thus imperative that this body should enjoy an independent statutory status.

The National Board of Examinations also taps the rich national resources by accrediting excellent private and public sector hospitals that have excellent facilities to train doctors in various broad and super specialties, with the resource crunch imposed in the field of higher medical education facilities in the medical colleges (attached to various universities) are bound to suffer and the time is not far away when one will have to depend heavily on the private and public sector hospitals to train Post Graduate in the newer and latest fields of medical education. These institutions are coming in big numbers to seek accreditation by the NBE if this support is continuously required by the nation; it is high time that the NBE be given an independent status. This timely action will put India as a leader in the field of higher medical education.”
In 2002, Hon’ble Dr. Manmohan Singh, as the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha had written to the then Union Health Minister to grant statutory status to NBE:

“The National Board of Examinations in the field of medicine, surgery and other medical and surgical specialties was started in 1974. Ever since its establishment it was intended that a statutory status would be accorded to the National Board of Examinations by an Act of Parliament which would equate its diplomas to the MD and MS of various Universities. Unfortunately this statutory status has not been given to the National Board of Examinations till this date. In this context I enclose herewith a note which sets out the merits of the proposal to give the National Board a statutory status by introduction of a Bill in Parliament as early as possible. In this note it is brought out that in a meeting held as early as 1994 under the Chairmanship of the Director General of Health Services, the President of the National Board, the Secretary to the Medical Council of India and the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of India were of the unanimous view that a statutory status to the Board with the introduction of a Bill in Parliament should be undertaken, immediately.

I shall be grateful if you will be kind enough to have this matter looked into on priority basis.”

Very recently, at a meeting of experts convened by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on 16th February 2010, it was suggested that:

PG Medical Education needs an independent regulatory body. National Board of Examinations is a body to look after PG education but it should be given statutory status.

Establish autonomous Post Graduate medical education board as a statutory body responsible to supervise all aspects of post graduate medical education as PG education requires better quality control. Two alternatives were suggested - either the NBE will merge with the proposed post graduate medical education board or the NBE will take full responsibility of post graduate medical education.

While rich nations could attract medical professionals to meet their needs and continue to do so, India needs to achieve a status of self reliance for the health human resources required in the country. It has been consistently expressed that this could only be achieved by a strategic reform of the current regulatory framework and enhance the supply of skilled personnel in the health sector. It was recognized that health professional education needed to be closely aligned to health systems needs in the country, both in terms of numbers and competencies of different cadres of the health force. Integration of learning and training through cross connecting educational programmes was also considered necessary for producing new cadres, calling for greater coordination among different councils.
Accordingly, the Government of India had proposed to set up a National Council for Human Resources in Health (NCHRH) as an overarching regulatory body. This follows the address made by the Honorable President of India, H.E. Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil, to the Parliament on 4th June 2009 which mentioned setting up of such a National Council. Pursuant to this, a task force for setting up the National Council for Human Resources in Health was constituted on 22nd June’09 under the chairmanship of Shri Naresh Dayal, Union Health Secretary and eleven members, comprising of eminent personalities in the field of medicine.

The aforesaid task force conducted its proceedings during June-July 2009 to make recommendations which are annexed herein (Annexure I & II). The task force has recommended the setting up of a National Council for Human Resources in Health (NCHRH) and the mandate of this proposed overarching regulatory body covers inter alia the regulation of Undergraduate and Postgraduate medical education, amongst other spheres.

It is imperative that the role of National Board of Examinations needs to be defined with respect to the new body/ proposed regulatory framework. As the NBE performs a very key function of providing qualified PG medical professionals trained at a wide range of hospitals/utilizing the existing health care infrastructure of the country; the perspectives of its stakeholders must be reflected in its ongoing consultations in the proposed NCHRH.

Before, the formal stand of NBE is communicated to the MoHFW in this regard, it is important to obtain stakeholders perspective on how best the NBE’s role can be defined or integrated with the proposed NCHRH. In order to ascertain the views of technical experts and accredited institutions, NBE seeks the viewpoints of its accredited institutes/experts in the field of health professional education. The outcome of the consultative exercise shall be considered by the Governing Body of NBE for further necessary action.

Various proposed models of Governance and Regulation of the Medical Education have been debated. The details of some of the models proposed the same and issues for consultation are contained in the detailed paper placed on the website of NBE: www.natboard.edu.in

It is requested that the Head of institute/hospital or its representative may participate in the consultative meeting scheduled to be held on 9th June 2010 (1000 AM to 0130 PM) at Auditorium, NBE office, Sector 9, PSP area, near District Court Dwarka. The travel and related arrangements may please be made by the concerned institutions on their own; NBE shall not be reimbursing any such expenses or making arrangements for the same.
In case of inability of an institute/hospital to participate, the response may be submitted by email to: acad@natboard.edu.in latest by 1000 AM on the 7th June 2010.

It is also requested that the names of participant(s) from your institute may be confirmed by email to: acad@natboard.edu.in or Fax: 011-45593031 / -11-45593009.

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Detailed Programme for the Consultative Meeting

Date: 9th June 2010

Venue: Auditorium, NBE, Sector-9 Dwarka, New Delhi

(Refer map enclosed for location details, sector 9 PSP area near District Court Dwarka).

Registration: 09:00 AM onwards

Welcome /Introduction: 10:00 AM

Brief Presentation: 10:10 AM

Discussions / response by participants: 10:30 AM

Concluding remarks and closing: 01:30 PM.

Lunch: 01:45 PM onwards.

Travel & related arrangements may be undertaken by the participating institutes at their own discretion; NBE shall not bear the same.

For queries if any, please contact: 011-45593000.