

COMMISSION ON DIETETIC REGISTRATION

Computer-based certification tests integrate testing and scoring, increase convenience



Like so many other aspects of our lives, technology has also affected the testing experience. The large halls and sharpened No. 2 pencils of the past have been replaced with small, private testing carrels and computer keyboards.

Beginning in July 1999, candidates for the Commission on Dietetic Registration's (CDR) entry-level dietitian and dietetic technician registration examinations will join with the numerous other professionals, such as nurses, architects, pharmacists, and physical therapists, who take their certification and licensure examinations on computer. In 1994, CDR made the decision to implement computer-based testing (CBT) for its entry-level examinations because computerized testing introduces many previously unheard of advantages to testing. Advantages include the following:

- more frequent test administrations,
- shorter examinations,
- shorter testing time,
- immediate score reporting,
- shorter waiting period to retest, and
- enhanced test security

This means that throughout the year candidates will

be able to schedule appointments to take the registration examinations at any one of more than 200 computerized testing centers across the country, and they will receive their score report as they leave the test center. Anxious weeks of waiting for score results will be a thing of the past. CBT integrates the testing and scoring processes as has never before been possible.

As with a paper-and-pencil examination, an examinee will pass or fail based on total test performance. The individual candidate's score report will continue to include a pass/fail rating, a total scaled score (1 to 50), and a scaled score on each of the 2 subscales of nutrition services and foodservice systems/management. With CBT, candidates will take tests of varying lengths and start and stop at different times, making it impossible to provide raw scores by domain and percentile rank. However, individual results from CBT will be aggregated over time so that program directors will receive percentile rankings from the previous calendar year.

The institutional report will continue to include the first-time and repeating examinee pass/fail count, total scaled

scores, percentile ranks, mean and standard deviation for the total scaled score, and nutrition and foodservice subscales for institution examinees compared to the national scores. Raw score information for content domains will not be provided for the reasons previously noted. Institutional score reports will be sent to dietetics education program directors once a year rather than twice a year as currently provided. As CBT will be administered throughout the year, it is not possible to predict candidate volume fluctuations over the year. After some experience with CBT and its effect on candidate volume during the year, this report schedule will be re-evaluated.

Although it is apparent that there will be some changes in score reporting in a CBT environment, it is reassuring to know that there will also be many similarities to the current system. Look for additional CBT updates in future issues of the *Journal*. A computer-Based Testing session will be offered at the 81st Annual Meeting and Exhibition on Tuesday, October 20, 1998, from 4:30 to 5:30 PM.

Alternative Medicine: An Objective View

Oct 31, Palatine, Ill. Contact: Institute for Natural Resources, PO Box 4218, Berkeley, CA 94704-0218; 510/450-1650; fax, 510/652-1859.

November

Food Safety For the New Millennium

Nov 6, Culver City, Calif. Contact: Marilyn Magaram Center for Food Science, Nutrition and Dietetics of California State University, 18111 Nordhoff St, Northridge, CA 91330-8308; 818/677-3102; fax, 818/677-3446; E-mail: magaram.center@csun.edu

Alternative Medicine: An Objective View

Nov 13, Palatine, Ill. Contact: Institute for Natural Resources, PO Box 4218, Berkeley, CA 94704-0218; 510/450-1650; fax, 510/652-1859.

8th National Conference for Mental Health Professionals

Nov 13-15, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact: The Renfrew Center Foundation, 475 Spring Ln, Philadelphia, PA 19128; 800/736-3739.

Clinical Practice in Women's Mental Health

Feminist Perspectives on Safety and Healing. Nov 13-15, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact: The Renfrew Center Foundation, 475 Spring Ln, Philadelphia, PA 19128; 800/736-3739.

National Sanitation Foundation

International Conference on Food Safety

Nov 16-18, Albuquerque, NM. Contact: National Sanitation Foundation Food Safety Conference, 3475 Plymouth Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48105; 734/769-8010, ext 205; fax, 734/769-0109; E-mail: racder@nsf.org; Web site: www.nsf.org

A Multidisciplinary Approach to Nutrition Support

Sponsored by the Ohio Soci-

Managers Group Fall Meeting, National Restaurant Association, 150 N Michigan Ave, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60601; 312/853-2534; fax, 312/853-2548.

The Internet & Health Care: A Course for Health Professionals

Oct 22, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: Institute for Natural Resources, PO Box 4218, Berkeley, CA 94704-0218; 510/450-1650; fax, 510/652-1859.

National Kidney Foundation

48th Annual Meeting
Oct 22-25, Philadelphia, Pa. Contact: National Kidney Foundation, 800/622-9010; Web site: www.kidney.org

Nutritional Treatment and Self-Care Techniques for Patients with Eating Disorders

Oct 23, Portsmouth, NH. Contact: University of New Hampshire Continuing Edu-

cation, Brook House, 24 Rosemary Ln, Durham, NH 03824-3528; 603/862-4234; E-mail: learn.dce@unh.edu

Lactation Management Course

Oct 22-27, Malvern, Pa. Contact: Center for Lactation Education, Breastfeeding Support Consultants, 228 Park Ln, Chalfont, PA 18914; 215/822-1281; fax, 215/997-7879; E-mail: info@bsccenter.org; Web site: www.bsccenter.org