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To: Board Members **Date:** January 27, 2017

From: Jessica Sieferman **Telephone:** (916) 575-7170
Executive Officer

Subject: **Agenda Item 12 – Update, Discussion and Possible Action on
Recommendations Regarding California Laws and Regulations Examination
Frequency**

The Board works with the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) to develop the California Laws and Regulations Examination (CLRE) pursuant to Business and Professions Code (BPC) § [139](#).

OPES provides examination-related services to the DCA's regulatory boards and bureaus in order to ensure that licensure examination programs are fair, psychometrically sound, valid, and legal. Specific services provided include performing occupational analyses, conducting exam item development, evaluating performance of examinations, and consulting on matters pertaining to the measurement of minimum competency standards for licensure.

The Board contracts with [PSI](#) to administer the CLRE. PSI provides examinations through a network of computer examination centers in California and ten additional nationwide sites. The CLRE is offered every day of the year excluding major holidays. Exam candidates are able to schedule the CLRE online 24 hours a day.

If a candidate fails an examination, the candidate must wait 180 days before taking the examination again. Since many candidates wait until graduation or shortly thereafter to take the CLRE, this can delay the licensing process – which impacts how quickly candidates can enter the workforce.

Part of the Board's 2012 Strategic Plan (Goal 2, Objective 2.2) was to “evaluate the benefit and cost of increasing the frequency of offering the California Law and Regulations Examination.”

Shortly after the 2012 Strategic Plan adoption, it was reported to the Board that the cost did not outweigh the benefit of increasing exam frequencies. In early 2016, staff met with OPES to re-evaluate the CLRE frequency. After considering the costs and benefits to increase the frequency, staff concurs with the initial report.

In addition, at the Board's request, OPES analyzed the possibility of increasing the number of examinations administered per year in order to reduce the amount of time required before a candidate who failed can retake the examination. The analysis and recommendation is attached.

Should the Board decide to increase the frequency, it has a few options:

- The first option is to have one examination published every three months totaling four examinations per year. If a candidate were to fail the examination then the waiting period would be 90 days before the candidate could retake the exam. This would cost \$46,836¹ per year, which is a \$28,284² increase from the current cost of examination development.
- The second option is to publish two alternate forms every six months which would also total four examinations per year. The waiting period in this case would be a little different. If a candidate were to fail the examination, the waiting period to take the examination again could be determined by the Board. OPES policy is a minimum of 30 days. So, if a candidate were to fail, the initial waiting period could be 30 days and then they could take the alternate form of the examination. In the event that the candidate fails the second form of the examination during that examination cycle, the candidate would then need to wait for the next examination cycle (maximum wait of six months) before taking the exam again. This would cost the same as the first option.
- The third option is to publish one form of the exam every four months totaling three exams per year. In this scenario, if a candidate were to fail, the waiting period to retake the exam is 120 days. The cost associated with publishing an exam three times per year is \$53,088³, which is a \$23,336⁴ increase from the current cost of examination development.

According to the information provided, these options would benefit roughly 10% of candidates per year. If the Board decides to proceed with this route, it would take a minimum of one year to implement.

Action Requested:

Please discuss the information provided and determine the direction the Board would like to take. The Chief of OPES will be present during the meeting to help answer any questions and provide additional information if needed.

Attachment:

1. OPES Memorandum

¹ \$46,836 OPES Costs + \$11,200 Subject Matter Expert (SME) Costs

² \$17,084 OPES Costs + \$11,200 SME Costs

³ \$41,888 OPES Costs + \$11,200 SME Costs

⁴ \$12,136 OPES Costs + \$11,200 SME Costs



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MEMORANDUM

DATE	January 10, 2017
TO	Jessica Sieferman, Executive Officer State Board of Optometry
FROM	 Heidi Lincer, Ph.D., Chief Office of Professional Examination Services
SUBJECT	Passing rate for first time candidates of the State Board of Optometry California Laws and Regulations Examination

The California State Board of Optometry asked the Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) to discuss the possibility of increasing the number of examinations that are administered per year in order to reduce the amount of time required before a candidate who failed can retake the examination.

Currently for the Board, OPES conducts examination development to produce two examinations that are administered in six month cycles. There are three one-day workshops that are held each cycle in order to support the development of each exam. The current cost of examination development to sustain two examinations is \$29,752 per fiscal year.

The proposed examination development requested by the Board would require four examinations per year. This examination schedule would consist of the same number of workshops, but it would increase the duration of each workshop to two days for each type of workshop held. The cost for OPES to increase to four examinations is \$46,836 per fiscal year. However, this does not include the costs incurred by the Board for recruiting and paying additional subject matter expert (SME) honorarium and travel expenses.

Should the Board decide to increase the number of examinations held per year, the change would take time to build up the question bank to a level that could support the proposed frequency. Additionally, the Board has historically had difficulty in recruiting the number of SMEs that are necessary to support the current examination development process.

In order to produce an examination that maintains adequate testing standards and is legally defensible, the Board would need to increase SME attendance to 6 to 8 SMEs for each workshop on a consistent basis. If SME attendance improves and the question bank is adequately increased, then the additional forms per year could be developed. This process would take a minimum of one year.

Passing rate for first time candidates

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The table below shows the pass rate for first time candidates for each administration of the examination starting in April, 2014 and ending in September, 2016. The data show a relatively consistent pass rate for first time candidates. Three of the five administrations have a pass rate over 90%, meaning that a vast majority of candidates are passing the examination on their first attempt. For instance, in the most recent examination cycle (April, 2016 to September, 2016) only 19 candidates failed to pass the examination on their first attempt.

In light of the current pass rate and the added cost of increasing the number of examinations per year, OPES believes it is not feasible at this time to increase the number of examinations offered per year.

If you have any questions about this memo, I can be reached at 916-575-7265.

Pass rate for first time candidates		
04/01/14 to 09/30/14	# of 1 st Time Candidates	223
	Pass %	97.31%
09/30/14 to 04/01/15	# of 1 st Time Candidates	104
	Pass %	73.08%
04/01/15 to 09/30/15	# of 1 st Time Candidates	231
	Pass %	97.40%
09/30/15 to 04/01/16	# of 1 st Time Candidates	76
	Pass %	84.21%
04/01/16 to 09/30/16	# of 1 st Time Candidates	236
	Pass %	91.94%
Total Pass Rate	Total Number of 1 st Time Candidates	870
	Total Average Pass %	91.84%