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MEMORANDUM

To: ABHES-Accredited Institutions and Programs
Recognized Accrediting Agencies
State Departments of Education
Dr. Nancy Regan, U.S. Department of Education
Interested Parties

From: Carol Moneymaker, Executive Director
Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES)

Date: May 29, 2009

Subject: Commission Actions

At its April 2009 meeting, the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) took the following actions.

I. Approval of Revised Accreditation Standards

Following a two-year period of consideration by both the ABHES Standards Review Committee and the Commission, including comments from the membership and other interested parties, the Commission approved revisions to the *Accreditation Manual*, effective January 1, 2010. The *Accreditation Manual*, 16th Edition, is currently undergoing editing and is expected to be posted by July 1, 2009. All institutions and programs accredited by ABHES are expected to adhere to the new standards on January 1, 2010. **Applicants for accreditation with Self-Evaluation Reports due this year for the first visitation cycle in 2010 will be held to, and evaluated on, the current accreditation standards (*Accreditation Manual*, 15th Edition).**

The revised standards are a culmination of best practices for accreditation of health education institutions and programs. The revisions will allow better directed time toward each individual program's outcomes; a focus crucial to the future success of the student. Orientation sessions provided by ABHES to assist institutions and programs as they amend internal practices to comply with the new standards are scheduled in various cities throughout 2010 and have been met with great enthusiasm. We urge ABHES members and applicants for ABHES accreditation to attend one of these sessions. The schedule for 2009 is attached and posted at www.abhes.org. There is no registration fee to attend.

The *Accreditation Manual*, 16th Edition, includes a separation of requirements for institutionally- and programmatically-accredited members. This separation means that schools seeking or holding **institutional accreditation** by ABHES must comply with general, administrative requirements per the revised Chapter IV and the educational requirements set forth in the revised Chapter V. These standards are applicable to each program offered by the institution and will be evaluated as such by program specialists.

Those seeking or holding **programmatic accreditation** by ABHES (medical assisting, medical laboratory technology, and surgical technology) must comply with the new Chapter V, *Evaluation Standards Applicable to All Educational Programs*, plus the additional programmatic standards, specific to the program, that follow in subsequent chapters. It is important to note that institutions seeking or holding programmatic accreditation are required to be accredited by another recognized accreditor, already monitoring and evaluating administrative compliance; therefore, adherence to the new Chapter IV, *Evaluation Standards Applicable to Institutionally-Accredited Members*, is not applicable. The programmatic standards for medical assisting, medical laboratory technology, and surgical technology have also been amended following consideration by the applicable Programmatic Accreditation Committee and consideration by the Commission of public comment.

Additionally, the program-specific standards for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (DMS), which is not a program ABHES accredits programmatically, have also been amended and approved following consideration by ABHES' Program Advisory Committee for DMS and consideration by the Commission of public comment.

Again, all standards included in the *Accreditation Manual*, 16th Edition, are effective **January 1, 2010**.

II. Status of Program-Specific Standards

Additional program-specific standards beyond DMS will continue to be introduced by ABHES for public comment. The intent of the development of program-specific standards for programs offered at schools ABHES accredits institutionally is to more clearly define ABHES' process of evaluating each program individually, consistent with its process for programmatic accreditation. The implementation of written program-specific standards has several potential results including (i) assisting its members and applicants to assure their program continues to meet commonly-accepted educational and competency prerequisites for entrance into the field, (ii) allowing more consistency in review by providing evaluators and programs more precise guidance on expectations, and (iii) allowing for a more universal acceptance of the validity of ABHES accreditation in preparing graduates for the workplace.

ABHES anticipates final proposed revisions to dental assisting to be sent for additional public comment this summer, with radiologic science and pharmacy technology closely following.

III. Approval of Bylaws

The Commission considered comments received on proposed revisions to its bylaws and acted to approve revisions, effective **June 1, 2009**. The revised bylaws are attached and will be included in the current edition of the Accreditation Manual, posted at www.abhes.org.

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Contact me directly at cmoneymaker@abhes.org or by phone at 866.462.0717 with any questions.

Attachment (ABHES Workshops and Meetings Registration Form, Bylaws)