

Examinees Remain Golden in California

CALIF. BUDGET CRISIS WON'T AFFECT LICENSING TESTS

Editorial Staff

The ongoing state budget crisis certainly has been on the mind of many Californians as of late. In July, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger slashed the pay of full-time civil servants and cut more than 10,000 temporary jobs in an effort to close the \$15.2 billion budget shortfall. As it stands, the state had no new budget as of late August.

As if these developments were not worrisome enough, an Aug. 13 article in the *Sacramento Bee* raised even-more-troubling possibilities for would-be acupuncturists looking to take their licensing exams. According to the article, "Job Cuts Pinch California Agency That Runs License Exams," the cutbacks in temporary workers would potentially eliminate the proctors who supervise the licensing exams for approximately 255 professions - everyone from accountants to vocational nurses. The State and Consumer Services Agency, which is responsible for administering these exams, would take the biggest job hit - 3,284 workers, nearly three-quarters of whom serve as these exam proctors.

As part of this particular article, acupuncturist-in-waiting Scott Rowe of San Francisco was interviewed as to his feelings about what appeared to be the very real possibility that the state would cancel his upcoming licensing exam due to lack of proctoring personnel. He stated, "I have so many things to worry about, and the state budget was one more thing. If the exam was postponed, it would be terrifying."

Certainly the tone of the article made it sound as though the state's ability to administer licensing exams to acupuncturists was up in the air. Even the California Acupuncture Board had been forced to respond to these ongoing concerns when, at its March 11, 2008 meeting, board member Robert Brewer asked Executive Director Janelle Wedge, "What is the effect of the ongoing budget crisis on the Acupuncture Board?" Wedge responded that the board was not affected, as it is specially funded.

In an effort to clarify just what effect, if any, the ongoing California budget crisis might have on the acupuncture board's ability to administer licensing exams, *Acupuncture Today* asked Wedge to clear up any potential misunderstandings the *Bee* article may have created.

According to Wedge, the board does not use state employees, but instead contracts with a private firm to provide exam proctors. "The State and Consumer Services Agency granted us an exemption on our contract, which allows us to use a separate company to supply proctors. We never did use state proctors."

Part of this was due to advanced planning on the part of the Acupuncture Board. According to Wedge, the Board had made a case for how the use of state proctors might potentially affect licensees in the event of a state budget crisis. "We were very fortunate and lucky," she said, reassuring California acupuncturists that the impression the story may have given of licensing exams being in imminent

danger of cancelation is not true.

So, it would appear that, for the time being at least, would-be acupuncturists can breathe easy as far as the possibility of their licensing exams being cancelled due to a lack of available proctors. One can only hope the overall state budget crisis can be so easily resolved.

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