



Physical Therapy Board of California

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Briefing Paper

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Prepared for: Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
Physical Therapy Board of California (PTBC) Board members

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SUBJECT: License Applicant Status pursuant to Business & Professions Codes: 2639-2640 & 2655.91 in regard to the FSBPTs implementation of fixed date testing

Purpose: To provide information regarding the history of License Applicant Status, and the potential problems that fixed date testing may cause.

Background: In 1996, SB 1962 set forth a separate procedure for License Applicant Status when the National Physical Therapist Examination (NPTE), was administered via computer, per the Business & Professions Code Section 2640(d) "If the applicant fails to take the examination within 90 days or fails to pass the examination or receive a license, all privileges under this section shall terminate. An applicant may only qualify once to perform as a physical therapist license applicant." .

In order to address security concerns and protect the integrity of the NPTE, the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy (FSBPT) implemented a fixed date testing system effective July 1st, 2011. By offering the NPTE on a limited number of fixed dates, the FSBPT claims it will be able to ensure that the NPTE given on a particular date will not contain previously compromised items. This change in procedure is designed to substantially reduce or eliminate candidates' ability to gain a score advantage by having advance access to NPTE questions.

There will be three date testing dates for the remaining part of 2011; September 7th, October 26th, December 5th.

There will be five testing dates in 2012. FSBPT has yet to determine these dates.

Analysis: With FSBPT's implementation of fixed date testing there is a potential for problems for applicants who file their application more than **90 days** before the soonest fixed date available to them. It can be further complicated if the applicant is not willing to travel to a second or third test location that has vacancies or has chosen to attend a later test date. The problem currently lies with the 90 day time limit.

The potential scenario could occur: If the Applicant does not, for whatever reason, (e.g., scheduling, travel, illness) take the first available test date their license applicant status would end in 90 days and before the next available test date. This would make them ineligible to work under the License Applicant Status for the rest of the licensure process.