I started my service as Biofeedback Certification Institute of America (BCIA) Chair in October 2006, and I am challenged to fill the shoes of outgoing chair Dr. Douglas DeGood. His work on certification review projects and ethics was monumental. He will be missed! To read more about him and his work, please visit www.bcia.org in the BCIA & Board News section of Certificants Only.

I think you will agree with me that biofeedback is alive and well! Biofeedback is finding its way into more esteemed scientific publications and also into the lexicon of the average consumer. We realize that for all of us to succeed, more work on this front remains to be accomplished. There is a profound interest in using fewer pharmaceuticals, and we treat many disorders left undertreated and untreated by conventional medicine.

BCIA wants to take its rightful place as the credentialing body for the clinical practice of biofeedback. Toward that end, I want to tell you about several of our projects.

Certification by prior experience (CPE). We realized that our certification requirements are really well suited to instruct the novice on how to add biofeedback to his or her practice. There is an entire population of highly educated and well-trained clinicians for whom this certification process is not appropriate. It is our goal to reach out and encourage these professionals toward certification by recognizing their course work and clinical experience.

This certification is open to all providers who are appropriately licensed in a BCIA-approved health care field and who can demonstrate an advanced level of education and more than 3,000 hours of clinical work with patients and clients.

At this point, we understand that many seasoned biofeedback clinicians may not need our credential, but we support the idea that the field needs it! Building our clout by numbers will give us the voice we need in areas of training, legislative representation, marketing, and professionalism. Please visit our Web site at www.bcia.org for further information on CPE, or contact the office at (303) 420-2902.

Validation exams. Keeping our exams relevant and current is a continual challenge. To this end, we have launched a validation process. This was a much larger job than anticipated, and we drew on the time and talent of many of the top professionals in the field. You can help us by participating in short validation sessions that are held at every Association for Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback (AAPB) conference.

Web site. BCIA’s Web site (www.bcia.org) has gone through a facelift. You can download brochures, fact sheets, and application forms from the site. The Certificants Only area has been updated to include copies of various articles of interest. Our Web site also features YOU! We encourage all certificants to expand their listings by giving more descriptive information about their practices.

Sample public relations letter. Often, the first hurdle is getting an insurance provider, third-party payer, or other health care professional to recognize the power of biofeedback, but we realize that it is only Step 1. We have developed a public relations (PR) letter that answers the next logical question: Who is eligible to provide this
service? Please visit www.bcia.org in the Certificants Only area under PR letter to view a copy of this letter. We would be happy to personalize this letter for you so that you can send it out to an employer, an insurance decision maker, or any other professional entity who needs to know the importance of the hard work you did to attain your credential.

Food and Drug Administration combined response. We are aware of many of your concerns surrounding a proposed U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation of the clinical practice of biofeedback. The text of the FDA guideline should be read in its entirety at http://www.fda.gov/cber/gdlns/altmed.htm. After review of their position paper, it is our belief that the FDA plans to regulate devices used in complementary and alternative medicine, with no intent to regulate who can practice.

As stated in the FDA guideline, biofeedback is an example of mind-body medicine, and “practices in this domain [mind-body medicine] would not be subject to our [FDA] jurisdiction.” The FDA will continue to regulate biofeedback machines as class II devices. This FDA policy has been in place for many years.

It is our belief that the FDA does not intend to regulate biofeedback practice. AAPB, International Society for Neurofeedback and Research, and BCIA worked together to send a joint letter to the FDA showing our support for their position and letting them know who we are to this field. To read a full copy of this letter, you can visit www.bcia.org in the Certificants Area Only under Board and BCIA News.

BCIA response to ruling in Michigan. Recent court proceedings in the state of Michigan attempted to regulate the practice of biofeedback. Our letter was written in response to the decision limiting the practice of biofeedback to only licensed psychologists. Our position, in accordance with state law and the BCIA Ethical Principles, confirms that only the treatment of psychological and/or medical conditions requires a license. In addition, we informed them of the many health care professionals who appropriately use clinical biofeedback applications. We were told that our letter was a powerful and well-stated argument that shows that biofeedback is a modality well used by the wide variety of health care professions we accept for our certification.

If you would like to be further involved with BCIA, we welcome your input. Please let us know how we can serve you better in representing the gold standard in the field. Our Web site is at www.bcia.org, and our email address is bcia@resourcenter.com. We are open to your ideas.

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