

Policies and Procedures for CAQ Maintenance Exams Administered Online

Eligibility

- NCCPA evaluates applications for the Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) program and CAQ maintenance without regard to age, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or disability and fully complies with non-discrimination laws and its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Eligibility criteria and requirements for earning and maintaining a CAQ are provided in the *Policies Regarding the Certificates of Added Qualifications Program* published on NCCPA's website. Only those PAs who are currently board certified by NCCPA with the designation of PA-C and meet all other eligibility criteria are eligible to earn or maintain a CAQ. A PA holding the PA-C Emeritus designation is not eligible to earn or maintain a CAQ. NCCPA does not waive any eligibility requirements.
- It is the responsibility of the board-certified PAs who are registering for a CAQ to read and meet the requirements of the CAQ for which they are applying. If NCCPA determines that an ineligible individual registered for the CAQ program, took a CAQ examination, or earned or maintained a CAQ, the eligibility, examination scores, and the CAQ for that ineligible individual, as applicable, will be rescinded.
- PAs may be registered for more than one CAQ program at a time.
- PAs must provide NCCPA information on all licenses and federal privileges to practice as a PA that they currently hold or have held as a PA, and the status of the licenses and federal privileges must be in compliance with the criteria listed in the eligibility section of the *Policies Regarding the Certificates of Added Qualifications Program*. The status of all licenses and federal privileges to practice that the PA held in the period since the PA last applied for a CAQ exam will be verified by NCCPA. PAs maintaining their CAQ agree to provide NCCPA with any and all requested information and the authority to request and receive further information to verify the license and/or federal privilege status. If, for any reason, the license and/or federal privilege to practice cannot be verified by NCCPA, the PA may be deemed ineligible for the CAQ program.
- PAs must continue to meet all eligibility criteria for the CAQ, including current NCCPA board certification and all licensure/privilege requirements, throughout the entire time in which they earn and maintain the CAQ. Requirements for notifying NCCPA of the changes to licensure and/or privilege to practice information are provided in the *Policies Regarding the Certificates of Added Qualifications Program*. If, for any reason, the license and/or federal privilege to practice cannot be verified by NCCPA, the PA may be deemed ineligible for the CAQ program. In accordance with NCCPA's *Code of Conduct*, PAs holding a CAQ must report any adverse regulatory or credentialing action to NCCPA within 30 days of issuance.
- There is a ten (10) year cycle for maintaining a CAQ. In addition to meeting all other requirements for maintaining a CAQ, including earning 125 Category I CME credits in the CAQ specialty since the CAQ

was issued, PAs must take and pass the CAQ maintenance exam within three attempts prior to the expiration of the current CAQ expiration date. For each CAQ maintenance exam attempt, PAs may register either for a test-center based CAQ exam or the online CAQ maintenance exam. PAs registering for the online CAQ maintenance exam are subject to this Policy; PAs registering for the CAQ exam administered in a test center are subject to the Policies and Procedures for CAQ Exams Administered in Test Centers. If the exam has not been passed within three attempts, the CAQ will be invalidated as of the expiration date of the PA's current ten-year CAQ cycle. For PAs who take and pass the CAQ maintenance exam prior to the tenth year of their cycle, the ten-year CAQ maintenance cycle will be reset based on the year the examination is passed.

- Board certified PAs who apply to take the CAQ maintenance exam while under disciplinary review by the NCCPA will be permitted to apply for and take the CAQ exam. However, the CAQ examination results will not be released, and the PA's CAQ status will not be updated based on those exam results, until a final decision has been reached and the matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of NCCPA.
- PAs who lose eligibility for a CAQ after submitting the exam application and fee will be deemed ineligible and restricted from scheduling or taking the exam to maintain a CAQ, will be withdrawn from the exam process, and will forfeit the exam registration fee.
- If NCCPA determines that an ineligible individual took an examination, scores for that examination will be invalidated and not reported or, if previously reported, will be rescinded.
- Unsuccessful examinees may apply for a subsequent examination but must continue to meet the CAQ eligibility requirements described above and provided in the *Policies Regarding the Certificates of Added Qualifications Program* at the time of their next application.
- PAs who lose a CAQ due to the expiration of their PA-C certification may reinstate their CAQ upon regaining their PA-C certification, as long as the original or most recent CAQ expiration date has not passed and the PA meets the licensure/federal privilege requirements for the CAQ program. The CAQ will be reinstated for the period of time remaining in the PA's most recent CAQ maintenance period. PAs who lose a CAQ for any other reason, including NCCPA disciplinary actions, must begin the CAQ process anew by meeting the eligibility requirements for initial CAQs, including passing the CAQ examination, or may seek a reinstatement of their CAQ when they regain certification by filing a request for an exception to policy, as long as their CAQ expiration date has not passed and the PA meets the licensure/federal privilege requirements for the CAQ program.

Testing Accommodations

- NCCPA complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations for examinees with documented physical or mental impairments that constitute disabilities under the ADA. Accommodations may also be approved for examinees with documented qualifying medical conditions that may be temporary or are not otherwise covered by the ADA, including those that require the use of medical devices or medication during the examination.

- Accommodations are provided on an individual basis and depend on the nature of the disability or medical condition. NCCPA will make reasonable efforts to provide the requested accommodations provided the functional impairment has been demonstrated through documentation, the accommodations do not fundamentally alter the measurement of the skills or knowledge the examination is intended to test, do not jeopardize examination integrity or security, and do not result in an undue burden to NCCPA.
- The decision as to which accommodations will be provided is at the sole discretion of NCCPA, consistent with legal requirements.
- PAs requesting accommodations must indicate that accommodations are needed and identify the specific accommodation(s) requested when applying for the examination by completing the questions provided as part of the application process.
- PAs should submit appropriate and sufficient documentation to support the request for accommodations to NCCPA with the exam application or as soon as possible thereafter. Failure to provide NCCPA with appropriate documentation in a timely manner will cause a delay in the review process and the applicant's ability to schedule and take the exam. Information on *testing accommodations* and the required documentation are available online on NCCPA's website.
- PAs requesting exam accommodations must comply with NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for Examination Accommodations*, which provides detailed information regarding available accommodations and the documentation requirements.
- Requests for accommodations will not be granted by NCCPA until complete documentation has been received, and a request for accommodation may be denied based on insufficient documentation or if the submitted documentation does not adequately support the requested accommodation. An exam administration date with accommodations cannot be scheduled until a decision granting the request has been made by NCCPA, and all steps have been completed by the PA to accept the agreed upon accommodations.

Application Deadlines

- All exam application materials and payment must be submitted before an application can be completely processed, allowing the PA to schedule the exam. NCCPA will accept applications, payments, and supporting documentation in accordance with the deadlines published on NCCPA's website. A document or payment will be considered submitted on or before the published deadline if:
 - it is physically received by NCCPA on or before the deadline, with the fee paid either by check or online through the PA's NCCPA account;
 - it is received by NCCPA after the deadline, but it was deposited on or before the deadline in the U.S. Postal Service registered or certified mail, and the official U.S.P.S. postmark date (not a private postage meter mark) appears either on the envelope or on the receipt provided by the U.S.P.S. at the time of mailing; or
 - it is received by NCCPA after the deadline, but it was deposited on or before the deadline with a commercial expedited-delivery courier service, as verified by the tracking record.

CAQ Maintenance Exams Administered Online

- The examination administration window for the online CAQ maintenance exam is published on the NCCPA website, and NCCPA will provide PAs with an examination acknowledgment after their application for the CAQ exam has been processed. The examination acknowledgement includes instructions on accessing the online exam.
- The timing for the opening and closing of the exam is established by NCCPA and cannot be adjusted based on requests from PAs participating in the online CAQ maintenance exam.
- PAs must take the examination in a location and manner in which no other individual may view the test items in the examination and must not disclose or consult with any other individual about the content of test items viewed by the PA.
- Information on the system requirements for accessing the online CAQ maintenance exam is published on NCCPA's web site and provided in the examination acknowledgment. PAs are responsible for ensuring that their computer/device and the location(s) where the PA intends to take the examination meet the requirements specified in the exam confirmation email BEFORE beginning the exam.
- Until a response to an exam question has been submitted by the examinee or the time allotted for the question has expired, the PA may not advance to the next question. PAs may not return to an exam question after a response has been submitted or after the time has expired for that question.
- If a PA selects a response but the time allocation for the question ends before the PA clicks on submit, the answer that was selected will be recorded for scoring purposes, as if the answer had been submitted.
- Questions that are not answered will be scored as incorrect.
- NCCPA conducts analyses of questions administered. It may be possible that a small number of exam questions may be removed from scoring based on the results of the analyses.
- PAs will be able to access the exam during the dates noted for the administration on NCCPA's website. All 120 questions must be answered within this window, and five (5) minutes are allowed per question. PAs may log in to the system at their convenience during the specified dates for the exam window, subject to the exam security and integrity provisions of this policy. PAs may determine the number of questions they answer in one sitting. PAs will typically have the ability to access the exam continuously throughout the exam window, except for rare occasions during which the system may be undergoing maintenance or unavailable for reasons outside of NCCPA's control.
- The performance of all examinees is monitored and may be statistically analyzed for irregularity. Exam results that, in the sole discretion of NCCPA, do not represent a reasonable assessment of the examinee's knowledge as sampled by the examination may be judged invalid (neither pass nor fail).
- Exam results may be considered invalid for a variety of reasons, which may include aberrations in the exam administration beyond the examinee's control and intentional or inadvertent irregular behavior (see Irregular Behavior) on the part of one or more examinees. Also, if statistical analyses indicate that exam results may be invalid, the exam results will not be released, may be rescinded if already released, and may be voided pending completion of an analysis to verify validity.

- NCCPA reserves the absolute right to cancel an examination and/or invalidate one or more scores or exam results if, in its sole discretion, NCCPA determines that irregular behavior has occurred.
- NCCPA is not responsible for the PA's computer problems or internet connectivity issues. It is solely the responsibility of the PAs taking the online CAQ maintenance exam to ensure they have access to a functioning device with the minimum system requirements and internet connectivity when responding to the online CAQ maintenance exam questions.
- PAs are permitted to consult reference materials when taking the online CAQ maintenance exam. However, PAs taking the online CAQ maintenance exam are prohibited from discussing the content of the exam questions with others, including for purposes of obtaining an answer, to get help with an answer by having others answer the questions for them, or to assist another PA who is taking or plans to take the CAQ maintenance exam. PAs are also prohibited from disclosing, distributing, or sharing the exam content with others, whether while taking the exam or at any other time. A breach of this policy may be considered irregular behavior under NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters* and a violation of NCCPA's *Code of Conduct*, with serious consequence.
- PAs who decide not to take the online CAQ maintenance examination and want to withdraw their application must submit a request in writing via fax, mail or e-mail to NCCPA to be withdrawn from the examination prior to accessing the exam. NCCPA must receive the withdrawal request prior to the PA accessing the exam content and at least one (1) business day prior to the scheduled close date of the examination administration, or the PA will forfeit the entire examination registration fee, as noted in the Financial Policies section.
- PAs who do not withdraw their application prior to accessing the exam and at least one (1) business day prior to the scheduled close date of the exam are required to submit a new application and full fee payment if they choose to apply for a CAQ maintenance exam in the future, unless an exception to policy based on extenuating circumstances has been granted.
- After accessing the examination, PAs ordinarily may not cancel or reschedule the exam, and no refund of any portion of the examination registration fee or credit toward future examination fees will be provided unless the PA files an exam grievance or exception to policy that is granted by NCCPA, as described in the Exam Grievances and Appeals and Exceptions to Policy sections. An accessed examination will be treated as a completed examination attempt that counts towards the three attempts available to PAs for CAQ maintenance.
- Examinees who, due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control, are unable to complete the examination or feel their performance was negatively impacted during the exam administration may file an exam grievance or exception to policy, as described in the Exam Grievances and Appeals and Exceptions to Policy sections. Otherwise, the examination will be scored as usual.

Financial Policies (Fees, Withdrawals, Transfers, Cancellations, & Refunds)

- An examination registration fee is due when the CAQ examination application is submitted. Since PAs log their CAQ CME along with the CME required to maintain NCCPA certification, there is no separate CME fee for maintaining a CAQ.
- NCCPA's acceptance of payment does not imply eligibility for the CAQ program or exam.
- PAs who are deemed eligible and who neither withdraw from the exam prior to accessing the exam content and at least one (1) business day prior to the scheduled close date of the exam nor access the

exam during that period will forfeit their entire CAQ examination registration fee and must submit a new application and full payment if they choose to take a CAQ exam in the future, except as set forth in NCCPA's policies. PAs who experience extenuating circumstances, as previously noted, may file an exception to policy or an exam grievance, as described in the Exam Grievances and Appeals and Exceptions to Policy sections, to potentially avoid forfeiting their fees.

- No application to take the CAQ maintenance exam will receive final approval until payment for all current, outstanding, and past due fees has been received by NCCPA. Any additional fees incurred between the time the application is processed and the time the PA's exam results become available must be paid before NCCPA will release exam results.
- All fees must be paid in U.S. funds. NCCPA encourages PAs to pay their fees online through their NCCPA account. Until complete payment has been received by the NCCPA, the application will not be processed and the CAQ examination cannot be scheduled.
- PAs are required to pay the difference in exam registration fees if they transfer to a timeframe that requires additional fees.
- If a PA loses eligibility for a CAQ after submitting the respective exam application and fees or if, at any time, it is determined that a PA provided incorrect eligibility information on any NCCPA application, the PA shall forfeit all fees.
- Refunds will be issued directly to the party who paid the fee.
- NCCPA will assess a \$35 service charge for all returned checks, declined credit cards and credit card charge backs.
- NCCPA will assess a \$50 charge to issue a replacement CAQ certificate due to name change, loss of the certificate, change of address, or other factors beyond NCCPA's control.

Exam Results

- Results from the CAQ exams will be released to examinees after NCCPA has completed all scoring and validation processes, unless disciplinary proceedings are pending against the examinee. NCCPA will notify examinees by e-mail as soon as examination results have been processed and posted to the PA's personal certification record.
- PAs may not register to repeat an examination if they have scores pending from a previous administration of the same examination. If a PA is deemed ineligible for a CAQ after taking the exam but prior to the release of exam results, the exam results will be invalidated and not reported to the PA.
- Upon notification of the exam results, PAs may contact NCCPA to request that a printed copy of the performance report be mailed to the address on file for the PA. PAs who have not received the requested performance report within 30 days and have not had an address change may submit a written request for a duplicate score report.

- The performance of all examinees is monitored and may be statistically analyzed for irregularity. Exam results that, in the sole discretion of NCCPA, do not represent a reasonable assessment of the examinee's knowledge as sampled by the examination may be judged invalid (neither pass nor fail).
- Exam results may be considered invalid for a variety of reasons, which may include aberrations in exam administration beyond the examinee's control and intentional or inadvertent irregular behavior (see Irregular Behavior) on the part of one or more examinees. Also, if statistical analyses indicate that exam results may be invalid, the exam results will not be released or may be rescinded if already released and may be voided pending completion of an analysis to verify validity.
- NCCPA reserves the absolute right to cancel an examination and/or invalidate one or more scores or exam results if, in its sole discretion, NCCPA determines that irregular behavior has occurred.

Exam Grievances

- Examinees who believe that an unusual event or condition during their exam administration caused a significant adverse effect on their performance or their ability to complete the exam may submit a grievance to NCCPA to petition for an invalidation of their score. An exam grievance may not be used to challenge exam design, content or a failing score.
- To report a grievance, the examinee must submit to NCCPA via email, fax, or mail a completed *Exam Grievance Submission Form* describing the situation with any relevant supporting documentation. The completed Exam Grievance Submission Form and any supporting documentation should be submitted as soon as practicable, but in no event later than three (3) business days after the date on which the exam administration occurred. Additional information on submitting an exam grievance is provided in the *Exceptions to Policy and Exam Grievances* section of NCCPA's website.
- Invalid scores do not satisfy the examination requirement for maintaining a CAQ.
- NCCPA will not consider exam grievances related to a PA's computer problems or internet connectivity issues. It is solely the responsibility of PAs taking the CAQ online maintenance exam to ensure they have access to a functioning device with the minimum system requirements and internet connectivity when responding to the CAQ exam questions. PAs are advised not to wait until the final day of the exam administration to respond to exam questions so they can address, before the expiration of the exam window, any computer or connectivity problems they may experience.

Appeals and Exceptions to Policy

- PAs who disagree with an NCCPA decision or the application of a policy to their circumstances have the right to seek review of that decision or to seek consideration of a policy exception by mailing, emailing, or faxing a written and signed request with appropriate supporting documentation to NCCPA. Additionally, PAs who have experienced an extenuating circumstance(s) which may have impacted their ability to take or complete the examination have the right to submitting an Exception to Policy in accordance with NCCPA's *Policies Governing the Consideration of Requests for Exceptions to Policy*. Upon receipt of the request, NCCPA will make a decision on the request and provide a written notice of the decision to the PA. If the decision is adverse, the PA will be provided with a copy of the *Review and Appeal Policies and Procedures*, which describes the process for requesting further review of the

decision. If further consideration is desired, the Request for Review must be filed within 30 days after the date of notice of the adverse decision.

Auditing

- To ensure the reliability and accuracy of the CAQ and maintenance processes, NCCPA may audit the requirements of PAs who have applied for CAQ or have successfully completed the CAQ process. PAs who fail the audit or refuse to submit to an audit may be subject to loss of the CAQ and/or other disciplinary actions as deemed appropriate by NCCPA and in accordance with the *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*.

Irregular Behavior

- NCCPA defines irregular behavior as any behavior that, in the sole discretion of the NCCPA, undermines or threatens the integrity or validity of any part of the application, assessment, or any other process of NCCPA, whether it occurs before, during, or after an application, examination or other NCCPA process. The *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters* describes examples of irregular behavior and the disciplinary actions that may be taken based on irregular behavior. Nothing in this policy shall limit or prevent NCCPA from imposing sanctions as set forth in its *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*.
- Irregular behavior related to an examination or examination items includes, but is not limited to, engaging in, or assisting another individual in engaging in:
 - cheating or other dishonest behavior;
 - compromising the security of an examination;
 - reproducing, distributing, displaying or otherwise misusing a test question or any part of a test question from an examination, including copying answers from someone else or allowing one's answers to be copied, or copying or memorizing and reproducing test items;
 - using recording or photographing devices on test items, having or seeking access to exam materials before an exam;
 - having or seeking access to exam materials before the exam;
 - consulting with another person about a test item after seeing the test item and before answering the test item;
 - violating the published examination procedures for the examination or the specific examination conditions authorized by NCCPA for the individual in a way that casts doubt on the individual's exam results or that of another person;
 - disclosing to another person the specific content of any test item or test answer;
 - impersonating an examinee or engaging someone else to take the exam by proxy;
 - altering or misrepresenting scores;
 - or other behavior which may cast doubt on the exam results of the individual or another person.
- Irregular behavior also includes (but is not limited to) making false representations during the application process or in connection with a PA's certification or CAQ status; altering or falsifying any NCCPA document, NCCPA certification or CAQ; making a false representation that one is certified by NCCPA or has earned a CAQ issued by NCCPA; or illegitimately using the legally-protected marks, PA-C® or Physician Assistant-Certified® or by any other means.

- The content of the exams administered by NCCPA, and each of their items, is proprietary and strictly confidential, and the unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure, discussion, or receipt of any examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral, or other form of communication, including but not limited to e-mailing, copying or printing of electronic files, and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during, or after an examination is strictly prohibited. In addition to constituting irregular behavior subject to disciplinary action as described in NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*, such activities violate NCCPA's proprietary rights, including copyrights, and may subject violators to legal action resulting in monetary damages.
- Examination applicants or examinees can be disqualified from taking an examination, continuing to sit for an examination, receiving examination scores, or sitting for any future examination, and may be required to retake an examination if, at its sole discretion, the NCCPA determines through any means available to it, that the examination applicants or examinees may have engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other irregular behavior before, during the administration of, or following, the examination, or if the NCCPA determines that the integrity or validity of the examination is otherwise in question.
- While it is permissible to consult reference material when responding to the online CAQ maintenance exam questions, PAs may not discuss the exam questions with others or ask others for answers. The examination is an assessment of the participants' own knowledge (even if informed by consulting published reference materials or the PA's own notes) and must represent the PA's own abilities. Failure to work independently of others on the CAQ maintenance exam questions will constitute irregular behavior.
- For exam quality and security and for research purposes, NCCPA collects and uses the information described below, and any other information deemed relevant by NCCPA, in order to prevent, detect, investigate, and remediate exam-related misconduct, such as cheating, fraud, deception, or collusion among exam participants:
 - Collection of exam data: When an individual uses exam software, information is collected on the individual's response data (i.e., response dates, response times, responses, keystrokes, etc.
 - Combination with existing information: NCCPA may combine the exam data with other information it has collected about an individual through the individual's interactions with NCCPA.
 - Information received from third parties: In response to suspected irregular behavior, NCCPA may conduct an investigation based on interviews, publicly available information, responses to requests from NCCPA to third parties for information, internet searches, or third-party investigators. This information may be combined with other information to determine whether irregular behavior has occurred.
- In some instances, while the evidence of irregularity is sufficiently strong to cast doubt upon the validity of scores, such evidence may not enable NCCPA to identify the particular individuals involved. In any such circumstances, NCCPA reserves the right to withhold the scores of all candidates, including candidates not directly implicated in the irregularity and, if necessary, to require all candidates to take an additional examination at a later date under conditions which will ensure the validity of all scores. Such determination is at the sole discretion of the NCCPA.
- Anyone who has information or evidence that irregular behavior has occurred should submit a written, signed statement to NCCPA detailing the incident, with copies of any supporting evidence or documentation.

- If NCCPA determines that allegations of irregular behavior are supported by available evidence, it will impose sanctions against the offending individual, in accordance with NCCPA's *Policies and Procedures for PA Disciplinary Matters*, or other sanctions as deemed appropriate in NCCPA's sole discretion. NCCPA may also initiate legal action against the offending individual. Certain sanctions (e.g., revocation, disciplinary or administrative suspension, or letter of censure) are public and are reported to the Federation of State Medical Boards and may be listed on NCCPA's website.

Other Relevant Policies

- NCCPA expects PAs applying for the CAQ program to review and comply with all applicable NCCPA policies, including NCCPA's *Privacy Policy* and *Terms of Use Policy*. Other NCCPA policies are available on NCCPA's *website*.

General

- NCCPA has established policies and procedures to govern its board certification and CAQ programs in an attempt to ensure that no PA participating in the programs receives an unfair advantage or disadvantage. Efforts are made to ensure that the programs are administered in compliance with the governing policies and the procedures developed for each program. However, if the integrity of a program is jeopardized, NCCPA reserves the right to invalidate the PA-C or CAQ credential or take other appropriate action.
- Only PAs who hold a valid NCCPA board certification may use the designations, Physician Assistant-Certified® and PA-C®. Both designations are legally protected certification marks over which NCCPA exercises exclusive control.
- Only PAs who hold a valid NCCPA board certification and a valid CAQ may use the CAQ credential along with their PA-C designation. A PA holding the PA-C Emeritus designation is not eligible to earn or maintain a CAQ.
- PAs who allow their NCCPA board certification to expire will lose their eligibility to earn a CAQ and/or any CAQs that are held will be revoked. Allowing NCCPA board certification to expire may affect a PA's authorization to work for their employer or to practice clinically in their jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of all PAs to know and comply with applicable state laws and/or their employer's or institution's policies regarding all requirements to practice.
- NCCPA board certification or a CAQ does not confer any property or contractual rights on any individual regarding continued or future certification, CAQ, or examination eligibility.
- NCCPA amends its policies from time to time, and PAs seeking or holding board certification or a CAQ, or engaging in recertification, certification maintenance, or maintenance of a CAQ must comply with NCCPA policies in effect at the time.
- Information on how NCCPA shares data is provided in the NCCPA *Information Disclosure Policy*.
- To ensure receipt of all NCCPA-related materials in a timely fashion, PAs must notify NCCPA in writing, by e-mail or by signing into their personal certification record online of any name, e-mail, or address changes, whether or not the U.S. Postal service is also notified. Notification of a name change must be

accompanied by a signed statement and an easily visible and legible, enlarged photocopy of the PA's current driver's license or passport displaying the correct name. **It is solely the PA's responsibility to notify NCCPA promptly of all name, e-mail, or postal address changes and to monitor NCCPA communications received at the physical and email addresses on the PA's NCCPA account.** Failure to do so may result in delays in receiving information and may lead the PA to miss reminders about deadlines for NCCPA requirements. PAs should ensure that NCCPA's domain name (nccpa.net) is listed as a permitted or trusted domain for the email account the PA has provided to NCCPA, in order to avoid having NCCPA's communications screened out or classified as spam, junk, or promotional messages. Failure to comply with an NCCPA examination-related or other requirement will not be excused on the grounds that a name, e-mail, or postal address has been changed unless acceptable and timely notice of such change was received by the NCCPA.

Affirmation and Authorization

I hereby apply to the NCCPA for examination and, upon fulfilling all requirements, issuance to me of a Certificate of Added Qualifications in accordance with and subject to the procedures and regulations of the NCCPA. I have read and agree to the conditions set forth in the NCCPA's *Policies Regarding the Certificates of Added Qualifications Program*, Policies and Procedures for CAQ Maintenance Exams Administered Online, and other applicable NCCPA policies and procedures. I agree to disqualification from examination; disqualification from participation in the CAQ program, denial or revocation of NCCPA Board Certification/Recertification or any NCCPA CAQ; denial of future eligibility for NCCPA Board Certification/Recertification or any NCCPA CAQ; and forfeiture and redelivery of any NCCPA credential granted me by the NCCPA, or any other sanction authorized in NCCPA's policies in the event that any of the statements or answers made by me in this application are false or in the event that I violate any of the rules or regulations governing an NCCPA examination or credential program.

I authorize the NCCPA to make whatever inquiries and investigations it deems necessary to verify my credentials, my professional standing, and my identity. I understand that this application and any information or material received or generated by the NCCPA in connection with my CAQ or with my Certification or Recertification will be kept confidential and will not be released except as follows: (1) the fact that I am or am not, or have or have not been, Certified or Recertified, my certification number, and the relevant dates, are matters of public record and may be disclosed; (2) if I have earned a CAQ in a particular specialty, and, if applicable, the relevant dates, are matters of public record and may be disclosed; (3) information will be released if I have authorized such release or such release is required by law; (4) publicly reportable final disciplinary action by NCCPA and the underlying facts thereof may be reported to state licensing agencies and to the Federation of State Medical Boards and may be disclosed to other interested parties and published by NCCPA, including on NCCPA's website; and (5) NCCPA shall disclose to state and federal agencies information requested by those agencies to facilitate the state licensure process or in connection with licensing oversight, regulatory actions, or law enforcement matters, or in connection with NCCPA's own disciplinary review process; such information may include examination scores or pass or fail status on an examination if requested. I understand that NCCPA will comply with state or federal laws, court orders, subpoenas, or military deployment information requirements. Further, I allow the NCCPA to use information from my application and subsequent examination for the purposes of research and statistical analysis, provided that my personal identification with that information has been deleted.

I understand that the content of NCCPA's CAQ exams and each of the examination questions are proprietary and strictly confidential, and that the unauthorized retention, possession, copying, distribution, disclosure,

discussion, or receipt of any examination question, in whole or in part, by written, electronic, oral or other form of communication, including but not limited to emailing, copying or printing of electronic files, and reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, before, during, or after an examination, is **strictly prohibited**. I further understand that, in addition to constituting irregular behavior subject to disciplinary action such as denial or revocation of board certification or a CAQ, denial or revocation of eligibility for future board certification or a CAQ, and disciplinary fines, such activities violate NCCPA's proprietary rights, including copyrights, and may subject me to legal action resulting in monetary damages.

I further understand that I can be disqualified from taking or continuing to sit for an examination, or from receiving examination scores, and that I may be required to retake an examination if, at its sole discretion, NCCPA determines through statistical analysis or any other means available to it, that I was engaged in collaborative, disruptive, or other irregular behavior before, during the administration of, or following, the examination, or if NCCPA determines that the integrity or validity of the examination otherwise is in question.

I further understand that, in some instances, while the evidence of irregularity is sufficiently strong to cast doubt upon the validity of scores, such evidence may not enable NCCPA to identify the particular individuals involved. In any such circumstances, I understand that NCCPA reserves the right to withhold the scores of all candidates, including candidates not directly implicated in the irregularity and, if necessary, to require all candidates to take an additional examination at a later date under conditions which will ensure the validity of all scores.

I have read and understand these statements, and I intend to be legally bound by them.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

I hereby agree to hold the NCCPA, its officers, directors, examiners, employees, and agents, harmless from any actual, consequential, special, or other damages arising out of any action or omission by any of them in connection with this application; the application process; my participation in the CAQ program, any examination given by the NCCPA; any score relating thereto; the failure to issue me any certificate or credential; any demand for forfeiture or redelivery of such certificate or credential, or the enforcement of any NCCPA policy or standard; provided, however, that my waiver of my right of recovery does not extend to any violation by NCCPA of a state statute or federal statute that authorizes a claim for recovery.

AGREEMENT TO RESOLVE LEGAL DISPUTES BY ARBITRATION: READ CAREFULLY, AS ARBITRATION LIMITS CERTAIN OF YOUR RIGHTS, INCLUDING YOUR RIGHT TO BRING A COURT ACTION

I and NCCPA agree that I and/or NCCPA have the right to elect that any dispute or claim between me and NCCPA (or any of its officers, directors, employees or agents) arising out of or relating to this application, any future application by me to NCCPA in connection with a certification, recertification, , or CAQ exam, my certification status with NCCPA, or enforcement of NCCPA's policies, whether the dispute is based on contract, tort, statute, or otherwise, be submitted to and resolved by individual binding arbitration before a single arbitrator within 30 miles of NCCPA's headquarters in Johns Creek, Georgia, under the commercial dispute rules and procedures of the American Arbitration Association; provided, however, that the arbitrator shall allow the filing of dispositive motions; and provided further nothing in this provision shall restrict NCCPA from seeking injunctive relief against me in any court of competent jurisdiction. The prevailing party in any such action shall be entitled to all costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred in connection with the litigation, and the arbitration fees shall be shared between the parties, except that if the statute giving rise to

the dispute provides for a different allocation of responsibility for attorneys' fees and costs, the arbitrator shall allocate responsibility for the arbitration fees and for the parties' attorneys' fees in accordance with the relevant statutory scheme at the conclusion of the arbitration. The arbitrator shall apply the law of the State of Georgia and/or U.S. federal law to the dispute.

The right to elect arbitration means that, if I or NCCPA file or threaten to file a court action, the other party can compel arbitration by sending a written notice compelling the party with a claim to instead file a demand for arbitration, and the court will no longer have authority to decide the claim. Arbitration is a method of resolving disputes between parties without filing a lawsuit in court.

IF EITHER I OR NCCPA CHOOSE ARBITRATION, NEITHER PARTY WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL OR TO ENGAGE IN DISCOVERY, EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN THE APPLICABLE ARBITRATION RULES, OR OTHERWISE LITIGATE THE DISPUTE OR CLAIM IN ANY COURT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AN ACTION FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF BY NCCPA. FURTHER, I WILL NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE AS A REPRESENTATIVE OR MEMBER OF ANY CLASS OF CLAIMANTS PERTAINING TO ANY CLAIM SUBJECT TO ARBITRATION. THE ARBITRATOR'S DECISION WILL BE FINAL AND BINDING. OTHER RIGHTS THAT I OR NCCPA WOULD HAVE IN COURT ALSO MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ARBITRATION.

The arbitrator shall have no authority to arbitrate claims on a class action basis, and claims brought by or against me may not be joined or consolidated with claims brought by or against any other person. The Federal Arbitration Act ("FAA"), 9 U.S.C. §§ 1, et seq., shall govern this arbitration provision. This arbitration provision shall survive the termination of my relationship with NCCPA.

RIGHT TO OPT OUT: I understand that I may opt out of this Agreement to Resolve Legal Disputes By Arbitration by sending NCCPA at the address that follows a notice ("Opt Out Notice") that NCCPA must receive within fifteen (15) days of the date I submitted this agreement. My Opt Out Notice must include my full name, my current address, my current telephone number, my current email address, my full social security number for identity verification purposes, and must be signed by me. Any Opt Out Notice will apply only to this arbitration agreement and will not apply to any prior or future arbitration agreements that I may enter into with NCCPA. The Opt Out Notice must be mailed with return receipt requested to:

NCCPA: Attn: Opt Out Notice; 12000 Findley Road, Suite 200, Johns Creek, GA 30097-1409.

In the event of any dispute concerning whether I have provided a timely Opt Out Notice, I must produce the signed receipt for mailing the Opt Out Notice. In the absence of the signed receipt, NCCPA's received date stamp on the Opt Out Notice shall be conclusive evidence of the date of receipt. These instructions constitute the only method that I can use to exercise my right to opt out of this arbitration agreement.

If I opt out, or if I file suit against NCCPA and NCCPA does not elect arbitration or if NCCPA files suit against me and I do not elect arbitration, I agree that any such action shall be governed by and construed under the laws of the State of Georgia without regard to conflicts of law. I further agree that any such action shall be brought in the applicable Court of Fulton County in the State of Georgia, or the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia; I consent to the jurisdiction of such state and federal courts; and I agree that the venue of such courts is proper. I further agree that, should I not prevail in any such action, NCCPA shall be entitled to all costs, including reasonable attorneys' fees, incurred in connection with the litigation.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE DECISION AS TO WHETHER I QUALIFY FOR THE CERTIFICATE OF ADDED QUALIFICATION RESTS SOLELY AND EXCLUSIVELY WITH NCCPA AND THAT THE DECISION OF NCCPA IS FINAL.

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THESE STATEMENTS, INCLUDING IN THE LIMITATION ON LIABILITY, AND THE AGREEMENT TO RESOLVE LEGAL DISPUTES BY ARBITRATION, AND I ACCEPT AND I INTEND TO BE LEGALLY BOUND BY THEM.