



THE NATIONAL FAIR ACCESS COALITION ON TESTING

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Supporting Qualified Professionals' Access to Tests

The Fair Access Coalition on Testing (FACT)

FACT is a multi-disciplinary, non-profit organization that advocates for health care and educational professionals to be able to administer and interpret tests for which they have been appropriately trained.

The Issue

All appropriate health care and educational professionals need to be authorized to utilize tests for the purpose of providing quality health care.

The Importance

Allowing qualified health care and educational professionals to use instruments helps the people of your state receive the highest quality of care. Supporting access to the greatest number of competent professionals regardless of professional discipline gives people whose lives are impacted by testing the greatest chance of being helped.

Tests

Tests are standardized and non-standardized instruments designed to help qualified professionals gather information about an individual's abilities, attitudes, aptitudes, and/or social and relational functioning. The information obtained helps the professional to assess the client's functioning, design and evaluate appropriate treatment plans, and identifies issues necessitating referral to other professionals. Testing is critical to the delivery of competent and quality health care. Tests are developed and standardized by a variety of practitioners.

Professionals Who Utilize Tests

Test users belong to many different professions. Some examples include audiologists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, school psychologists, and speech-language pathologists. These professions engage in self-regulation; this means that those who are most knowledgeable about a profession are the same as those who determine competencies, the education required to gain those competencies, the ethical principles under which those professionals practice, and the appropriate sanctions for those professionals who do not follow these guidelines.

Self-regulation forms the basis of protection for consumers since it has a long-standing legal tradition entailing the formation of a board or committee with legislatively and judicially recognized authority to determine and interpret standards of practice. Board members are experts in their own fields; they are not qualified to determine or interpret practice regulations for other professions.

Who is the most qualified to use tests?

Training and education are the two most important factors when determining who is competent to utilize a particular instrument. A specific academic degree (e.g., a master's or a Ph.D.) in any field does not by itself qualify an individual to use a particular test. Training to use a test is also a very important factor in determining competency.

Based on the principles of competency and self-regulation, FACT recommends and endorses the following legislative language to define testing and base a professional's right to test on competency. Ethically, all of these professionals are bound to practice within their scope of practice. As additional protection, the appropriate licensing authority possesses the authority to take action against any professional who practices outside his or her scope of practice.

Proposed Legislation

Section 1

Testing means:

(1) The selection, administration, scoring and interpretation of instruments, methods, and techniques for assessing behavioral, cognitive, communication, educational, emotional, mental, motor, psychological, sensory, social, and vocational functioning for diagnosis, evaluation, treatment and intervention.

Section 2

(a) It is unlawful for an individual to engage in testing as defined in Section 1, Article 1 unless the individual has adequate training and education.

(b) An individual who violates this section is subject to disciplinary action by their respective state licensing authority.

Revised by Board on 9/15/08