

# NCTRC Newsletter

FALL 2003 EDITION

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## A Message from the Chair

*Karen Wenzel, M.S., CTRS, Executive Director Rocky Mountain Multiple Sclerosis Center*

It has been a busy and productive time at NCTRC...although that this seems to be the “norm” and not the exception. The Spring Meeting of the Board of Directors was held April 9 – 12 in Nanuet, New York. This meeting was the first official Board Meeting with the new NCTRC Executive Director, Bob Riley at the

table. To say that the transition in leadership has been seamless is almost an understatement. Dr. Peg Connolly and Dr. Riley have worked diligently to assure that the operations of the Council would continue without interruption. The staff at NCTRC are also to be commended for maintaining services so efficiently during the tran-

sition period.

The Spring meeting also marked the end of a two year term of office for Dr. Jan Monroe in serving as Chair of the Council. Dr. Monroe had agreed to serve a two year term in an effort to provide continuity and oversight during the transition period. Her excellent leadership and hard

*(Continued on page 2)*

## A Word from the Executive Director

*Bob Riley, Ph.D., CTRS*

During my first few months as executive director, I have interacted with dozens of individuals who make NCTRC such a great organization. They have impressed me with their earnest work habits, level of productivity, and sincere sense of dedication to the goals and mission of NCTRC. I am honored to be entrusted with the stewardship of this important organization, and take very seriously NCTRC’s level of commitment to its membership of certificants and to the public at large.

Upon my arrival at NCTRC, I found a remarkable display of talent and energy. From the Board of Directors to the staff, including all the associated committees and professional consultants, NCTRC represents a unique blend of personal and professional attributes that enable the organization to achieve significant levels of productivity within a very creative atmosphere. Much of the credit for this organizational culture is attributed to the former executive director, Dr. Peg

Connolly. Under Peg’s leadership, NCTRC achieved significant growth and recognition within the national credentialing community. NCTRC has always exemplified the highest ethical standards and has been driven, first and foremost, to do what is right to protect the consumer of therapeutic recreation services. This mission-driven value will continue to direct every decision we make at NCTRC.

This period of transitional leadership affords

*(Continued on page 2)*



*“Working in partnership with both national and state therapeutic recreation associations, NCTRC is as committed as always, to assist our professional organizations in their efforts to gain both professional and public recognition for their therapeutic recreation constituency.”*

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### ***From the Chair of the Board***

work were celebrated and acknowledged during the Spring meeting.

The April BODs meeting brought one new and one returning face to the Board. Dr. John Shank of Temple University, joined the Board as Treasurer. Ms. Cathy Lee (VAMC Northport, NY), who was re-elected to the Board, assumed a new three-year term. The new Board members were oriented and jumped in without missing a beat. Your new officers and executive committee have also assumed their responsibilities with enthusiasm and professional commitment. From a personal perspective, it's always a

great feeling to step into a leadership position, knowing that everything is operating smoothly and effectively. During the meeting the Board also completed a self-assessment process. Much of the feedback affirmed that NCTRC has very effective governance practices. We also identified areas for refinement and growth. The committees presented their reports and recommendations, and everyone updated the annual work plan of the Council.

The most significant decision made at the meeting was a standard change increasing the number of TR Content Courses for certification eligibility. This issue has been under study for over a year, and the Board decision to increase the mini-

imum number of courses was based on data collected from the field. A change in standards is a big step for the Council, and this decision was thoroughly researched and evaluated. Please read more about this standard change and the timeline for implementation in this newsletter.

On behalf of the new and continuing board members, we are excited to have the opportunity to serve the Council, NCTRC certificants and the profession. We welcome your feedback and comments, and look forward to seeing you at the ATRA Conference and NTRS Institute in the fall.

**Karen Wenzel, M.S., CTRS**  
**Chair of the Board**

*(Continued from page 1)*

### ***From the Executive Director***

NCTRC the opportunity for self-reflection and critical assessment. As a result of intense evaluation, we have identified many things that we do well here at NCTRC. We have also discovered several opportunities for change and improvement. The Board of Director's Strategic Work Plan contains several of these identified initiatives including, among other things, a revised marketing plan and a comprehensive research agenda. Central to the success of any credentialing organization, is its relationship with its membership and its commitment to customer service. NCTRC is currently investigating strategies for improving its credentialing services, its products and its methods of communication. We are exploring opportunities to become more interactive with

certificants through the use of electronic communication and our website. All of us at NCTRC are enthusiastic about exploring ways of serving you even better.

In the coming months, the Board of Directors will investigate opportunities to strengthen the CTRS credential and the standards for professional eligibility and re-certification. Given the current climate of healthcare and human services, it is imperative that NCTRC maintain a viable role in directing the future of the therapeutic recreation profession. Working in partnership with both national and state therapeutic recreation associations, NCTRC is as committed as always, to assist our professional organizations in their efforts to gain both professional and public recognition for their therapeutic recreation constituency.

In closing, allow me to reiterate how privileged I feel to serve you as the executive director of NCTRC. I invite you to attend our annual meeting to be held at both the ATRA and NTRS national conferences this fall, to share your concerns and comments regarding NCTRC. If you are unable to attend these meetings, please feel free to share your thoughts with me by writing directly to NCTRC at the address on this newsletter or to our e-mail address: [nctrc@NCTRC.org](mailto:nctrc@NCTRC.org).

Thank you in advance for your continued support of NCTRC and I look forward to working with you to enhance the CTRS credential.

**Bob Riley, Ph.D., CTRS**  
**Executive Director**

## Doing the Right Thing: Addressing Misconduct in the Field

Lynn Anderson, Ph.D., CTRS, State University of New York at Cortland  
Matt Gold, M.S., CTRS, New York Psychiatric Institute

What do Sharon Watkins, Colleen Rowley, and Cynthia Cooper have in common? “Who?” you say. These three ordinary folks were chosen as the “Time Person of the Year for 2002,” sharing that honor with the likes of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. What these three ordinary women did was to help bring out the truth about unethical, negligent, or illegal actions in their work places, Enron, WorldCom, and the FBI. What they have in common is a belief in doing their jobs right, believing in the truth, and doing something when they saw things that were not right. Due to their individual bravery and actions, major changes are now occurring in the fields in which they work, with a much stronger focus on ethics.

When you go about your daily practice, it is easy to let some things slide that you feel are not right. It feels uncomfortable, sometimes threatening, to confront actions of colleagues that are unethical or illegal. But inaction and silence is support. Although it takes courage, it is your obligation to consumers, your profession, and yourself to address actions you see in your workplace that are “not right.” You may not become “Time Person of the Year,” but you will know you are contributing to the well being of consumers and the profession. But, what can you do to address misconduct in the field? Ideally, like these three women did, you start within your own agency. There are times, however, when you need to go outside your agency because of inaction or the seriousness of the misconduct.

**How Do You Start in Your Own Agency?** If you observe potential misconduct on the part of a

fellow CTRS, address it with your supervisor immediately. By using the internal systems of an agency, a colleague could be given help immediately, before he or she makes mistakes that hurt their consumers. If you address issues before they become serious questions of misconduct, you may help a professional evolve into a more competent practitioner. The use of clinical/peer supervision is an excellent means of preventing misconduct, as colleagues monitor and help shape each other’s professional behavior.

However, if you observe a CTRS violating the profession’s codes of ethics as set by ATRA and NTRS, or NCTRC’s national certification standards, it is your responsibility to report that violation to NCTRC as well as your employer.

**What Violations Should You Report?** Violations include: irregularity in connection with the NCTRC exam, attempting to obtain certification or recertification through false or misleading statements, misrepresentation of the NCTRC certification, failure to provide written information required by NCTRC, and gross or repeated negligence or malpractice, among others. You can access the “Grounds for Issuing Sanctions” from the NCTRC standards, (p.5-6), or on the NCTRC website ([www.nctrc.org](http://www.nctrc.org)).

**How Do I Report a Violation?** Alleged violations must be submitted in writing to the NCTRC Executive Director. You need to identify the person alleged to be involved and the facts concerning the alleged misconduct. You need to provide as much information as you can, including others who have knowledge of the alleged misconduct. You

must provide your name and contact information as well – reports cannot be anonymous. The NCTRC Standards clearly outline the required information to report a violation.

**What Happens When I Report a Violation?** The Executive Director refers the reported violation to the Standards Review Committee (SRC) of NCTRC. If the SRC determines that good cause exists to continue the process, it will request that the person named respond to the allegation. After fact-finding, if the SRC determines that a violation has occurred, it is empowered to issue sanctions, which could involve denial of eligibility or suspension or revocation of certification. Sanctions may also include conditions like taking a college level professional ethics course before certification is reinstated.

**What if I Report a Frivolous Allegation?** The disciplinary process described above is taken very seriously by NCTRC. Its intent is to sanction unethical and illegal behavior on the part of professionals to protect the consumer. It is not a vehicle for personal retribution or settling of scores, nor for the reporting of actions that are better handled by an employer (e.g., tardiness to work, poor work habits). A frivolous allegation could itself be grounds for sanction.

There is no question that making a formal allegation that a CTRS has violated an NCTRC standard is a serious matter, and could very well be one of the most difficult actions you take. The only action more difficult could be inaction. When you do the right thing, you are protecting the consumers and the therapeutic recreation profession.

## A Call for Nominations for the NCTRC Board of Directors

*Diane Groff, Ph.D., CTRS*

NCTRC relies on the Board of Directors, Executive Director, staff and certificants to accomplish its mission of "protecting the consumer of therapeutic recreation services by promoting the provision of quality services by NCTRC certificants." You can help accomplish this mission by identifying certified professionals who might be willing to devote time and talent to NCTRC by serving on its Board of Directors.

The NCTRC Board consists of nine voting positions. Seven positions are elected by NCTRC certificants. The remaining two positions,

the Consumer Representative and Employer Representative, are appointed. Each member of the Board must be willing to serve a three-year term that involves two three-day meetings and semi-annual conference calls each year. In addition, each Board member is expected to contribute to the NCTRC strategic plan by completing sub-committee assignments. Candidates for the Board must possess and maintain active certification with NCTRC during their term. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, Board members are not permitted to serve on other

national TR organization boards during their term of office.

The Nominations and Elections Committee is currently accepting names of certified professionals who wish to be considered for the 2005-2008 NCTRC Board of Directors. The Committee will convene in February 2004 to prepare the slate of candidates for the November 2004 election. Please submit your nominations to: Diane Groff, Chair, Nominations and Elections Committee or Bob Riley, Executive Director, NCTRC at (845) 639-1439, or [briley@NCTRC.org](mailto:briley@NCTRC.org)

## Ve Slogi Je Mõc!

*Janice Elich Monroe, CTRS, Chair, Board of Directors 2001-2003*

It is difficult to believe that six years have past since the certificants first honored me with election to the Board of Directors for NCTRC. As I reflect on these six years, I realize that I have learned so much, met so many people, and have had the opportunity to be actively involved in helping NCTRC move more closely toward the goal of ensuring consumer protection. During my tenure on the Board, I have also worked earnestly to try to enhance the public image of NCTRC. Dispelling the myths and setting forth a more accurate picture proved to be a daunting task at times. Hopefully, I have been successful in my attempt. In order for TR to flourish as a profession, NCTRC must remain a strong and respected organization.

I would like to share a short story. I am the grandchild of Eastern European immigrants from the early 1900's. My family and their friends were a small and poor minority in the United States. These individuals joined together and created clubs and organizations to help protect themselves from financial and social distress. St. Joseph's Hall in Pueblo, Colorado is a facility which was built by these Slovenian immigrants as a gathering place. In the dance hall of this building, there is a hand painted mural on the wall above the stage that depicts the immigration process. The slogan on this mural states..."Ve Slogi Je Mõc!" This translates to "In Unity there is Strength!" I encourage Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists

to reflect on this message and determine ways through which they can add strength to our profession through professional unity and collaboration. This goal does include working toward eliminating false perceptions and working together toward problem resolution.

Thanks to everyone connected with NCTRC for the opportunity to serve you as a member and Chair of the NCTRC Board of Directors. During my tenure I have learned so much and I have had the opportunity to work with many people who have enriched my life and have helped me to expand my understanding of the field of therapeutic recreation. For this exposure, I am eternally grateful! Thank you.

**NCTRC Military Reserve Status:** In April 2003, the NCTRC Board of Directors approved a Military Reserve Certification Status for CTRSs currently on active duty in the Armed Forces. NCTRC recognizes the efforts of the men and women serving in the Armed Forces and is committed to assisting them to maintain their CTRS or Professional Eligibility status. During the period of Reserve Status, the qualified individual is not required to complete the NCTRC annual maintenance or recertification application, pay annual renewal fees, and can delay completion of the NCTRC exam if test eligible. A qualified individual can remain on NCTRC Reserve Status as long as he/she is on active duty within a United States military service, not to exceed a period of two years. NCTRC Reserve Status will cease as of the date of official military discharge from active duty. For more information regarding the Military Reserve Certification Policy please contact NCTRC.

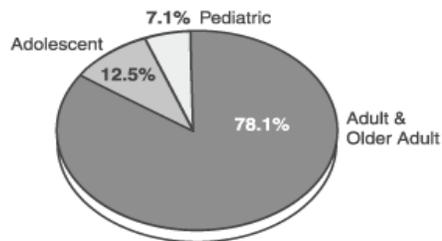
## **CTRS PROFILE BROCHURE**

In March of 2003 NCTRC published a new brochure: "*Pocket Profile of Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS)*". This new public relations publication contains vital facts about NCTRC and a current profile of actively certified CTRs.

Provided below are four illustrative graphs depicting employment characteristics of active CTRs. The profile brochure is distributed to all newly certified CTRs and to individuals who have completed their annual renewal and recertification. Additional copies have been sent to allied professional organizations and employment sites. If you would like a copy of the brochure, please contact NCTRC and we would be happy to send one your way.

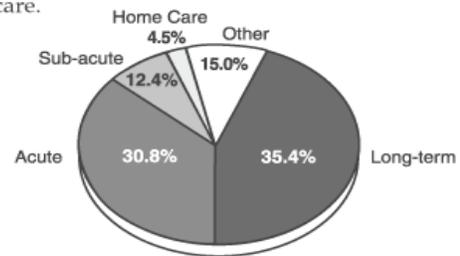
### **What age groups are served by CTRs?**

The majority of CTRs provide services to adults.



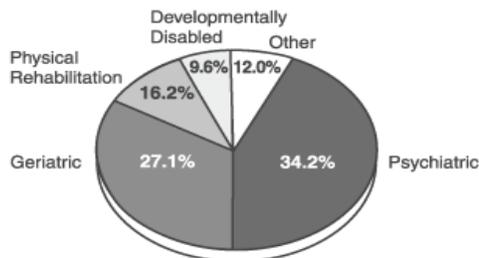
### **What level of care do CTRs provide?**

Nearly 50% of CTRs who are employed provide care in acute and sub-acute settings. Another 35% provide services within long-term care.



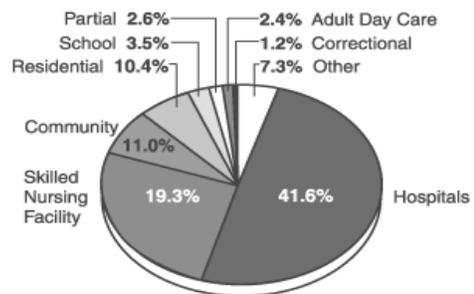
### **What populations do CTRs serve?**

Psychiatric and geriatric patients are most often served by CTRs.



### **Where do CTRs practice?**

Over 60% of CTRs practice in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities.



**Annual Meeting of Certificants:** Each year, NCTRC conducts its Annual Meeting for Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialists at the professional conferences of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA) and the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS). The official meeting will be held in St Louis, Missouri at the NTRS TR Institute during the National Recreation and Parks Association Annual Congress. The Annual Meeting will be held at the America's Convention Center on October 22, 2003 and will start at 4:00 pm. NCTRC will also sponsor a meeting for CTRs at the ATRA Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel on September 15, 2003 beginning at 12:30 pm.

The Annual Meeting with certificants is a valuable opportunity for NCTRC to share information regarding current activities of NCTRC, its Board of Directors, Committees and Staff. We have several exciting projects underway that we really look forward to sharing with you. We hope that you will attend the meeting at either (or both) conference sites. Please share this information about the annual meetings with other CTRs who may be planning to attend the NTRS or ATRA conferences. If you are unable to attend, please take the time to contact NCTRC with any concerns or suggestions you may have about the credentialing process.

## NCTRC Recertification

November is right around the corner and that means it's time for many CTRSs to **Recertify!** Please check your recertification expiration date. If you haven't already submitted your Recertification Application, please do so before the November 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. If you need an application, you can obtain a copy at [www.NCTRC.org](http://www.NCTRC.org). By sending in your materials and fees early, you can avoid the rush and be certain that your materials have arrived at NCTRC on time.

If you are recertifying in November '03 or May '04, it's important that you review the revised Recertification Standards. Updated standards went into effect December 31, 2002 and apply to

new certificants and CTRSs who recertify after December 31, 2002. Any CTRS within a recertification cycle that began between **December 1997 and December 31, 2002**, may continue to follow the current standards (or utilize the new ones) until their current five-year recertification cycle has been completed.

Please keep in mind it is extremely important that you participate in continuing education experiences that relate to the NCTRC Job Analysis. Additionally, please select professional level continuing education sessions sponsored by a reputable CEU provider. The NCTRC Board has adopted the following interpretive guideline with respect to professional level

continuing education: "*Professional level continuing education is defined as opportunities that are either sponsored by an organization representing professionals that have an entrance requirement of a four year degree or a continuing education experience that is primarily designed for an audience that possesses a bachelors degree or higher.*" Recertification should demonstrate that the CTRS is maintaining and enhancing knowledge and skill as related to the content areas of the NCTRC Job Analysis.

It is hoped that the above stated guideline will assist CTRSs to select high quality and acceptable continuing educational experiences for their recertification portfolios.

## Computer Mastery Testing in Full Swing

A full year of the Computer Mastery Testing (CMT) format applied to the NCTRC Exam has been completed with positive reviews from exam candidates. CMT has made becoming a CTRS a quick and convenient process. Candidates have praised the option of being able to choose from over 300 exam sites within the United States and Canada as well as receive the test results at the conclusion of the exam.

Some candidates enjoy the fact that they are able to complete the base test of 90 questions and depending upon results, receive a pass or fail decision. The individuals that complete additional testlets are also satisfied with the testing experience because they feel the exam provides them the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of the TR process in more depth. Overall, it appears that the CMT application

to the NCTRC Exam has been a great success.

The following information summarizes the participation rates and test results from the November 2002, February 2003, and May 2003 NCTRC exams. A total of 1059 candidates took the November 2002, February 2003, and May 2003 exams. In November, 78% of the 423 candidates were tested passed the exam. In February, 70% 298 candidates were tested passed the exam. In May, 73% 338 candidates were tested passed the exam.

The NCTRC Board of Directors and Staff are always looking for ways to improve the testing process. In an effort to make the testing experience more convenient for student candidates, the NCTRC Board of Directors has voted to change the exam cycle. Beginning in October of 2004, the NCTRC exam will be

offered three times a year using test dates that coincide more directly with the TR academic graduation periods (e.g. May, August, and December). The NCTRC Exam will still be administered by Prometric Testing Centers across the United States and Canada. The following dates will be the next cycle of NCTRC Certification Exams:

Application Deadline	Exam Date
Nov. 1, 2003	Feb. 2004
Feb. 1, 2004	May 2004
July 1, 2004	Oct. 2004
Oct. 1, 2004	Jan. 2005
Feb. 1, 2005	May 2005

## NCTRC Certification Standards: Changes, Updates and Effective Dates

It is the policy of the NCTRC Board of Directors to post notice of all standards changes well in advance to effective dates. The NCTRC Board of Directors has approved the following changes to the Certification Standards for entry-level professional eligibility.

### 1. Content Course Requirement: Increase the Required Number of TR Content Coursework from Three to Four Courses.

Effective Date: December 31, 2007

The standard pertaining to the required number of therapeutic recreation content courses will read as follows:

#### Academic Path

*"A minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter credit hours of therapeutic recreation and general recreation content coursework with no less than a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter credit hours in therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of 4 courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of 3 credit hours; ..."*

#### Equivalency Path A & B

*"A minimum of 18 semester or 27 quarter credit hours of upper division or graduate level therapeutic recreation and general recreation*

*content coursework with no less than a minimum of 12 semester or 18 quarter credit hours in upper division or graduate level therapeutic recreation content. A minimum of 4 courses in therapeutic recreation is required and each course must be a minimum of 3 credit hours; ..."*

### 2. Content Course Requirement: Increase in Required Number of Therapeutic Recreation Content Courses Completed Prior to Field Placement.

Effective Date: December 31, 2007

The standard requiring the majority of TR coursework to be completed prior to the field placement will read: *"The number of required therapeutic recreation content courses that must be completed prior to the field placement is 9 semester or 12 quarter hours in therapeutic recreation content coursework."*

### 3. Field Placement Change: Increase in Maximum Weekly Hours to 45 Hours Per Week.

Effective Date: July 29, 2003

The standard pertaining to the required number of field placement hours now reads: *"Minimum number of hours and weeks must be accomplished at one agency site*

*over a consecutive period of time: NCTRC standards refer to the required "minimum" numbers of hours. No less than 20 hours per week or more than 45 hours per week will be accepted for the field placement experience. Additionally, the field placement experience must be completed for no less than twelve consecutive full weeks. The total minimum number of required hours is 480. For students completing only 20 hours a week, the total number of weeks will be 24 to meet the minimum 480-hour requirements."*

### 4. NCTRC Certification Exam Schedule: Three Administrations per Year.

Effective Date: October 1, 2004

The NCTRC Exam will be offered three times a year beginning with the October 2004 test administration. This change will be implemented to align the test periods more closely with academic graduation dates (May, August, and December). Please consult the article on CMT for a listing of NCTRC Exam deadlines and administration dates (pg. 6).

## Review and Exam Statistics

**NCTRC Exam:** 1,660 candidates were tested between May 2002 and May 2003.

Exam Date	Number Tested	Pass Rate
May 2002	369	72%
August 2002	232	76%
November 2002	423	78%
February 2003	298	70%
May 2003	338	73%

**New Applications For Professional Eligibility:** From May 1, 2002 to May 1, 2003, 1,159 new applications were reviewed for professional eligibility. Of the 1,159 applications, 916 or 79% of the applications met the NCTRC Professional Eligibility Standards.

**CTRS Annual Renewal:** During May 2002 and November 2002, 11,831 or 90% CTRSs renewed certification.

**Recertification Application:** From April 2002 to April 2003, 1,875 applications for recertification were received. A total of 96% of the applications were approved for recertification, with 7% using the exam option for recertification while the majority (93%) used professional experience and continuing education.

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Fax: (845) 639-1471

Email:  
[nctrc@NCTRC.org](mailto:nctrc@NCTRC.org)

## NCTRC Board, Committee and Staff

### **Board Of Directors**

Karen C. Wenzel, CTRS  
(2001-2004) Chair, Rocky  
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Center, Littleton, CO

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John W. Shank, CTRS  
(2003-2006) Treasurer, Temple  
University, Wynnwood, PA

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sity of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill, NC

Marsha Edmondson (2003-  
2006) Consumer Representa-  
tive, Dallas, TX

Sandra K. Negley, CTRS  
(2001-2004) University of  
Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Jill Hardway, CTRS (2001-  
2004) ResCare of Indiana  
North, Fort Wayne, IN

Cathy Lee, CTRS (2003-  
2006) Department of Veterans  
Affairs, Northport, NY

Ray E. West, CTRS (2002-  
2005) Employer Representa-  
tive, University of North Caro-  
lina Hospitals, Chapel Hill, NC

### **Standards Review Committee**

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Lynn Anderson, CTRS  
(2001-2004) State University  
of New York, Cortland, NY

Matt Gold, CTRS (2003-  
2006) NYS Psychiatric Insti-  
tute, New York, NY

### **Standards Hearing Committee**

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House, Boston, MA

Margaret Williams, CTRS  
(2001-2004) Bryan LGH Hos-  
pital, Inc., Lincoln, NE

Donald E. Rogers, CTRS  
(2003-2006) Indiana State Uni-  
versity, Terre Haute, IN

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Teresa Beck, CTRS (2003-  
2006) Chair, Grand Valley  
College, Grand Rapids, MI

Pat Malik, CTRS (2001-  
2004) R.P. Malik Enterprises,  
Tremont, IL

James Shea, CTRS (2002-  
2005) Ahlbin Center's for Re-  
hab Medicine, Naugatuck, CT

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Sumita Gupta

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Sandra Henriquez

Sonia Jorge

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Cristina Meneses-Diaz, CTRS

Noelle Molloy, CTRS

Fernando Reyes

Bob Riley, CTRS

Dyann Serravillo, CTRS

*NOTE: All terms of office, in  
parenthesis after each name,  
begin and end in April of each  
year.*

*All correspondence to any  
member of the NCTRC Board,  
Committees or Staff should be  
mailed to:*

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