Subject: Peer Review Updates: COVID-19 Response and New Process

Dear State Board of Accountancy (SBOA) Executive Directors,

I hope this message finds you all healthy and safe. The AICPA peer review team wanted to reach out to the SBOAs to let you know that our first priority during this time is the health, safety and well-being of all peer review stakeholders. As such, we are operating with an abundance of caution and wanted to provide you with the following information about how we are responding to the pandemic and its potential impacts on peer reviews:

- Staff distributed a Reviewer Alert on March 18 to notify peer reviewers that the requirement for Administering Entity (AE) approval of offsite system reviews is waived for the coronavirus (COVID-19). COVID-19 related extension requests will be granted and required reviewer training is available online.
- This information was also shared on March 18 via email to all firms with open corrective actions, implementation plans or imminent due dates, and we are reminding firms to notify their SBOAs when extensions are granted, or to grant permission for us to do so.
- We hosted an emergency Peer Review Board (PRB) open session on April 2, 2020. The PRB approved temporary process changes to extensions and discussed temporary changes to reviewer and firm fair procedures.
- We temporarily put a hold on all firm drops and terminations from the Program.
- For more information, see the AICPA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Center, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Audit and Accounting page and/or the recent Reviewer Alert, Coronavirus Impact on Peer Review.

New process makes more information available to regulators

In direct response to your requests for increased transparency into the AICPA Peer Review Program, and specifically into firm’s reviews, we implemented a new process that makes it easier for SBOAs to receive certain objective Information about peer reviews performed in their jurisdiction.

Today, new firms enrolling or re-enrolling in the peer review program, and enrolled firms scheduling their reviews, are given the option in the Peer Review Information Management Application (PRIMA) to grant permission to the AICPA and the AE to provide specific objective information to SBOAs upon request. SBOAs that use Facilitated State Board Access (FSBA) will see this additional information in FSBA if firms provide the permission.

To assist with understanding the enhanced information available and how to locate it in FSBA, we’ve developed a video that provides a walk-through of FSBA, highlighting the enhancements added to the existing process. These enhancements provide SBOAs access to certain enrollment and objective peer review information when a firm has agreed to make such information available. Detailed information, including a Frequently Asked Questions document, is available on the video’s web page.

We know this is a difficult time for everyone, and we will collaborate with NASBA to share additional COVID-19 related communications and information in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have questions or we may assist in any way.

Sincerely,