

ABMS

“In the News”

May/June 2009



American Board
of Medical Specialties

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Press Clips, Media & Releases

May/June 2009

Part of ABMS' strategic mission is to communicate to appropriate external stakeholders that board certification is known as a major marker of quality for physician practice performance and that ABMS is recognized as the organization that establishes standards and criteria.

Shown in this book are the numerous mentions that ABMS has received in the press and media from May/June 2009.

If you have any questions or come across other mentions of ABMS in the media, press or on the Internet, please direct all copies to Lori Boukas, Director of Marketing and Communications so this information can be published back to the boards.

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Relevant Media

- 1) "Using Information to Optimize Medical Outcomes" – *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* – June 10, 2009
- 2) "Achieving Health Care Reform – How Physicians Can Help" – *The New England Journal of Medicine* – June 11, 2009
- 3) "The Science of Health Care Reform" – *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* – June 17, 2009
- 4) "AHRQ: US Quality of Care Falls Short; Patient Safety Declining, Disparities Persist" – *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* – June 17, 2009

Press Clips

- 1) May 2009
- 2) June 2009

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Press Clips



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ABMS Monthly Media Report May/June, 2009

Following is a summary of media coverage identified during the months of May/June related to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). A brief description of each story, along with an excerpt is provided as well as available links for complete articles. For other articles contact lboukas@abms.org.

ABMS Mentions

Story #1

Modern Healthcare

“Surgeons Association Offers Advice on Medical Tourism”

Shawn Rhea

May 9, 2009

This article is about a position statement on medical and surgical tourism issued by the American College of Surgeons urging people seeking healthcare services abroad to become informed of the potential risks and complications of receiving such care.

ABMS Mention: “The American College of Surgeons has issued a position statement on medical and surgical tourism that advises U.S. patients seeking care abroad to select healthcare institutions that meet accreditation standards established by recognized organizations and to choose surgeons and anesthesiologists who are certified in their respective specialties by organizations equivalent to the **American Board of Medical Specialties.**”

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090509/REG/305099996>

Story #2

Modern Physician

“ABMS Approves Plan for New Board Certification Process”

May 11, 2009

This news brief is about an ABMS announcement that it has approved a plan for its new board certification process. This news brief also appeared in the *Modern Physician* reader blog box on the *Modern Healthcare* Web site.

ABMS Mention: “The board of directors for the Evanston, Ill.-based **American Board of Medical Specialties** announced that it has approved a uniform set of standards--and timelines for their implementation--for the 24 member specialty boards of the ABMS to follow as they develop the elements of their individual maintenance-of -certification programs. The ABMS

Maintenance of Certification program is replacing the traditional specialty recertification exams that physicians took every few years with a process described as promoting ‘continuous professional development and assessment.’”

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090511/MODERNPHYSICIAN/305039975>

Story #3

American Medical News

“Surgeons Group: Medical Tourists Should Check Doctors’ Qualifications”

May 25, 2009

This article is about a position statement on medical and surgical tourism issued by the American College of Surgeons urging people who seek healthcare services abroad to look for hospitals that have been accredited by “recognized accrediting organizations,” such as the Joint Commission International, and to become informed of potential risks and complications of receiving such care.

ABMS Mention: “Patients also should search for surgeons and anesthesiologists certified in a process similar to that established by the **American Board of Medical Specialties**.”

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/05/25/prbf0525.htm>

Story #4

New York Times

“A Face From an Infomercial”

Catherine Saint Louis

June 4, 2009

This article is about branded face-lifts--certain minimally invasive procedures marketed directly to patients in a one-size-fits-most approach, usually online, on TV or in magazines. Two such face-lifts mentioned in the article are the Lifestyle Lift and QuickLift, both being marketed nationwide, promoting a short recovery and only local anesthesia. According to the article, while the procedures themselves aren't in question, doctors are concerned that patients may be so persuaded by advertising that they don't seek a second opinion or investigate the full range of options. Consumers may pick a minimally invasive procedure when the results they seek may require more complex--and expensive-- intervention, the article states. “What’s new is this is plastic surgery being marketed to the public as a widget,” said Dr. Brian Reagan, a plastic surgeon in San Diego. “People are buying, so buyer beware,” said Reagan.

ABMS Mention: “Here's some advice for those considering face-lifts. Check whether your surgeon is certified by one of the boards of the **American Board of Medical Specialties at abms.org**. They require physicians to complete residency training in a specialty and to pass rigorous oral and written exams.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04/fashion/04SKIN.html?_r=1&ref=fashion&pagewanted=print

Story #5

Boston Globe

“Looking for Dr. Right”

Liz Kowalczyk

June 8, 2009

This article offers tips for consumers looking for a physician and information on navigating online ratings sites. According to the article, online tools can be helpful, but the best place to start is still with family, friends, other doctors and insurance companies

ABMS Mention: “One of the most useful bits of information in the (online) profiles is whether a doctor is board certified. Doctors who have been certified by the **American Board of Medical Specialties** have passed a written test and met minimum training requirements, one important consideration when picking a doctor.”

http://www.boston.com/lifestyle/family/articles/2009/06/08/with_more_and_more_websites_rating_physicians_the_question_is_can_you_trust_them?mode=PF

Story #6

Medscape Today

“What Does Board-Certified Really Mean? An Expert Interview With James Wells, MD”

Pippa Wysong

June 18, 2009

In this article, Pippa Wysong interviews Dr. James Wells, a past president of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and current member of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, about why plastic surgeons should be board certified. Dr. Wells explains the process of board certification, maintenance of certification, and why certification by an ABMS Specialty Member Board is different than certification by a self-designated board, such as the American Board of Cosmetic Surgery.

ABMS & Specialty Member Board Mentions: “The **ABMS** was originally developed through the Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association and has 24 member boards...Doctors need to have completed 3 years of general surgery or be certified by the **American Board of Surgery**...Some physicians do plastic surgery procedures coming out of other specialties...For instance, ophthalmology has its own credentialing through the **American Board of Ophthalmology**...**ABPS** (American Board of Plastic Surgery) training and testing covers the entire spectrum of plastic and reconstructive surgery of the entire body. A big part of the certification process is **Maintenance of Certification**, which means doctors stay up-to-date with changes in their particular specialty.”

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/704278>

Story #7

ABMS issued a statement regarding the certification status of Michael Jackson's physician to selected media on June 29, 2009. The following media picked up information from the statement (organized by date, then alphabetically):

GossipBoulevard.com

June 29, 2009

<http://www.gossipboulevard.com/2009/06/29/michael-jacksons-doctor-wasnt-certified/7277/>

OK! Magazine.com

June 29, 2009

<http://www.ok-magazine.com/news/view/15344>

AllHeadlineNews.com

June 30, 2009

<http://www.allheadlinenews.com/articles/7015648363>

AZCentral.com

June 30, 2009

<http://www.azcentral.com/ent/celeb/articles/2009/06/30/20090630jackson-call.html>

ContactMusic.com

June 30, 2009

http://www.contactmusic.com/news.nsf/article/michael-jacksons-emergency-call-confusion_1108213

DenverPost.com

June 30, 2009

http://www.denverpost.com/celebritybuzz/ci_12714308

MonstersandCritics.com

June 30, 2009

http://www.monstersandcritics.com/people/news/article_1486839.php/Michael_Jacksons_emergency_call_confusion

MyParkMagazine.co.uk

June 30, 2009

<http://www.myparkmag.co.uk/articles/celebrity/michael-jacksons-emergency-call-confusion.html>

SoFeminine.co.uk

June 30, 2009

<http://www.sofeminine.co.uk/w/star/n520105/news/Michael-Jackson-s-emergency-call-confusion.html>

TheList.col.uk

June 30, 2009

<http://www.list.co.uk/article/18601-michael-jacksons-emergency-call-confusion/>

Modern Physician ONLINE

ABMS Approves Plan for New Board Certification Process

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090511/MODERNPHYSICIAN/305039975>

Posted: May 11, 2009 - 5:59 am EDT

The board of directors for the Evanston, Ill.-based **American Board of Medical Specialties** announced that it has approved a uniform set of standards—and timelines for their implementation—for the 24 member specialty boards of the **ABMS** to follow as they develop the elements of their individual maintenance-of-certification programs. The **ABMS Maintenance of Certification** program is replacing the traditional specialty recertification exams that physicians took every few years with a process described as promoting “continuous professional development and assessment.” The new principles cover processes for documenting whether physicians meet continuing medical education and self-assessment requirements, and boards must implement these processes by 2011. By 2010, the boards must implement processes for documenting that physicians are meeting practice-based assessment and quality-improvement requirements. Also effective in 2010, member boards must ensure that physicians will complete a patient-safety self-assessment program by 2012. The last standard requires physicians who are involved in direct patient care to take part in a communication skills assessment with patients in 2010 and one with peers in 2012. To this end, boards have been directed to use tools such as the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems patient survey, or CAHPS, to evaluate physicians’ ability to communicate.



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PROFESSION

News in brief - May 25, 2009

[Surgeons group: Medical tourists should check doctors' qualifications - IRB stung by investigation shuts down](#)

Surgeons group: Medical tourists should check doctors' qualifications

Patients looking to travel outside the United States for surgery should carefully consider the benefits and risks of doing so and seek out quality hospitals and physicians, the American College of Surgeons said in a policy statement released in April.

The college's statement advises medical tourists to look for hospitals that have been accredited by "recognized accrediting organizations" such as Joint Commission International. Patients also should search for surgeons and anesthesiologists certified in a process similar to that established by the American Board of Medical Specialties.✕

The nonprofit Medical Tourism Assn. sparked a controversy last fall when it began offering medical travel agencies a "certification" process. Officials at specialty boards and hospital accrediting agencies said the move could confuse patients.

The college also said it opposes insurers' requiring referral of patients outside the U.S. for care, and said payers should be responsible for coordinating care for medical tourists. The college's statement is similar to the American Medical Association policy adopted in June 2008.

About 6 million Americans will travel abroad for care by 2010, according to an estimate from the consulting firm Deloitte Center for Health Solutions. It is unclear how many patients are traveling for surgery, but many of the medical travel firms advertising to U.S. patients highlight the availability of procedures such as cosmetic surgery and hip replacement.

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IRB stung by investigation shuts down

A commercial independent review board that approved a phony research protocol submitted by the Government Accountability Office as part of a sting announced in April that it will close its doors. The firm, Colorado Springs, Colo.-based Coast Independent Review Board, initially said it would suspend operations until May 1 to review the faulty procedures that resulted in it unanimously approving a proposed trial for a fictitious device that fell into the Food and Drug Administration's "significant risk" category of devices.

Coast IRB said in late April that it would be "ceasing all operations in the near future," staying open only to facilitate the transfer of its clients to other IRBs. Coast is under FDA suspension as a result of the GAO investigation.

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boston.com

THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

Looking for Dr. Right

The Boston Globe

With more and more websites rating physicians, the question is: Can you trust them?

By Liz Kowalczyk, Globe Staff | June 8, 2009

It used to be that picking a good internist or a skilled surgeon was relatively straightforward: You'd call friends for recommendations, or ask relatives over a holiday dinner. Now, with the explosion of websites rating doctors over the past several years, the options for researching individual physicians are dizzying.

More than 40 Internet sites allow patients to rate their doctors based on their personal experiences, both good and bad, including [RateMDs.com](#), [DrScore.com](#) and now, Angie's List, at [www.angieslist.com](#). There also are dozens of town- and city-specific online communities, mostly for parents, where members regularly discuss their doctors and pediatricians.

Speaking to the growing attraction of consumer reviews, Angie's List, a respected source for ratings of plumbers, painters, and general contractors since 1995, added healthcare providers last year and has seen ratings of these professionals soar.

The company collects 40,000 reports from members every month, and 25 percent of these are now on doctors and other medical providers. "There's been a societal shift - consumers are going online to have a lot of the conversations they used to have over the back fence," said company founder Angie Hicks.

On top of these subjective ratings, several organizations and state agencies provide information on doctors' education, whether they've been disciplined for inappropriate behavior or poor care, if their office staff treats patients well, and, for surgeons, how much experience they have doing specific operations.

The question, though, "is what is reliable information?" said Dr. Mario Motta, a cardiologist in Salem and president of the Massachusetts Medical Society. "What separates the wheat from the chaff on the Internet?"

Some websites, like [RateMDs.com](#), don't even verify that the poster is actually a patient of the doctor they're rating, so a searing report could have been written by an angry neighbor and a glowing report, by the doctor's mother. Because of this, the site itself advises readers to "always take these ratings with a grain of salt."


When looking for a physician, many doctors and other healthcare experts said the best place to start is still with family and friends - and ask other doctors. Insurance companies also keep lists of doctors who are accepting new patients, as do most hospitals, if you want to have surgery at a particular institution.

"To a certain extent it's like blind dating," said Dr. Thomas Lee, a cardiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital. "How are you going to find someone you feel good about and really click with? Word of mouth referrals from friends and neighbors and doctors mean something."

Then, turn to online tools.

The first agency in the state - and the country - to provide online profiles of doctors was the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine. You can search for a doctor's profile at [www.massmedboard.org](#). The profiles list about 20 pieces of information, including where a doctor attended medical school, what type of insurance he or she accepts, and any criminal convictions or disciplinary actions by a hospital or the board itself. Obviously a checkered past is a red flag.

One caution in using this information: It can take years for hospitals and agencies to take action against a doctor, so a profile may not reflect an ongoing investigation. Also, the state updates profiles every two years, so a doctor's practice may be listed as open to new patients when it's actually closed. And some information may never become public, such as when a doctor has a substance abuse problem.

One of the most useful bits of information in the profiles is whether a doctor is board certified. Doctors who have been certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties have passed a written test and met minimum training requirements, one important consideration when picking a doctor. 

More websites are rating physicians, but can you trust them? - The Boston Globe

For surgeons, the state lists through hcqcc.hcf.state.ma.us the number of operations individual doctors have done and, for heart bypass surgery, the website includes mortality rates, although the data are several years old. While the research is not clear-cut, a number of studies have linked higher patient volume for certain procedures to better results because surgeons who do more operations have more practice.

Massachusetts Health Quality Partners, www.MHQP.org, ranks physician offices - though not individual doctors - with one to five stars based on how well they prevent and treat a variety of illnesses including asthma, depression, heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol. The organization, widely respected for the thoroughness of its data, also surveyed 70,000 patients and parents of pediatric patients about how well the doctors in a particular office know their patients and whether the office provides timely appointments.

Despite the effort that goes into these data-driven websites, Deborah Wachenheim, of the consumer advocacy group Health Care for All, said research shows that most people don't use them - either because they don't know they exist or because they don't provide the information people want. Information like "do they know what they're doing and are they going to be accessible when I need to reach them in a crisis?," Lee added.

The growing number of websites allowing patients to simply express their opinions are trying to fill this void - a trend that irritates many doctors.

Hicks said Angie's List requires posters to identify themselves and also identifies them to the doctor they're reporting on - though other consumers can't see posters' names. Members rate their physicians on availability, punctuality, bedside manner, and effectiveness of treatment and also post comments. One popular Boston physician, Dr. Martin Solomon, has an overall "A" rating based on reports from six patients, whose comments included "he's the best diagnostician I know" though "he is not that very prompt."

Solomon doesn't take issue with the comment - he knows he can run late. But he said that while websites such as Angie's List can be helpful, the shortage of primary care doctors means that patients often can't be that choosy and must see whomever is taking new patients. His practice, for example, is full, as are those of many of the highest rated doctors.

Computer programs check for posters trying to "game the system," Hicks said, such as reports on many different doctors from the same home - or lots of reports on one doctor from a computer in the doctor's office.

Susan Shapiro, 58, of Wayland, joined Angie's List two months ago to research appliance repair experts. When the company made an appeal for members to rate their doctors, she didn't hesitate. "I have two doctors who are exceptional, so I felt they deserved that kind of recognition," she said, but added, "if I had someone who was really rude, incompetent or a danger, I would have done that too."

Some physicians, however, say these sites don't have enough opinions to make them reliable. One Somerville doctor on Angie's List is rated with a "C" based on a report from one patient who commented that "she has become less adept at listening."

That, said Shane Stadler of Medical Justice, a North Carolina company founded by a neurosurgeon, could be an aberration or someone who tends to be negative about most things. There's no way for consumers to know, he said. His company sells a product to doctors that includes a contract they can require patients to sign, promising that the patient won't post comments about the doctor on the Internet. While companies like RateMDs.com tell disgruntled doctors "you can reply to any or all of your ratings," Stadler said patient confidentiality laws prevent doctors from doing so.

In the end, Motta said, the most important factor in choosing a doctor cannot be discerned over the Internet. It's "chemistry," he said. "Some patients want the facts and nothing but the facts. Other patients need a lot more hand-holding. Often you don't know until the visit."

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Michael Jackson's Personal Doctor Didn't Call Ambulance Because He Didn't Know The House Address

June 30, 2009 9:30 a.m. EST

Anne Lu - Celebrity News Service News Writer

Los Angeles, CA (BANG) - Michael Jackson's personal physician didn't call for an ambulance because he didn't know the singer's address. Dr. Conrad Murray - who was staying with the "Thriller" singer in Los Angeles when he died last Thursday - insists he tried his best to get help when he discovered the star in bed but was hampered by his unfamiliarity with the rented home.

According to the medic's lawyer, Edward Chernoff, Dr. Murray tried to call 911 but was unable to get a line out because of security restrictions on the property's phone lines. He considered using his personal mobile phone but realized he didn't know the address, and so shouted for other staff to help him.

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Edward said: "We can't tell you exactly when 911 was called."

The doctor rushed through the house and found Michael's chef, who alerted his security staff, who then called for an ambulance.

While waiting for paramedics, Conrad - who has been criticized for not moving the singer's body from the bed onto the floor - continued to perform CPR on the star.

Edward added: "Dr. Murray began performing CPR for several minutes as he tried to revive him, unsuccessfully."

"With Michael still on the bed, he put one hand under Michael's back for support and was compressing with his other hand. He continued to check the pulse, and the pulse remained."

The star was then taken to hospital and pronounced dead at 2:26pm.

Despite reports that Michael was addicted to prescription drugs and had been given an injection of painkiller Demerol shortly before his death, the lawyer insists his client never administered them.

He added on U.S. TV show "Good Morning America": "I can state unequivocally there was no Demerol. There was no Demerol administered by Dr. Murray and no one observed him using Demerol. I am not sure there that came from. I can tell you it is false."

It has now been alleged that the doctor - who first met Michael in 2006 but became his personal physician just last month - is no longer certified by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

The ABMS, which oversees 24 Member Boards, says Dr. Murray was certified in internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine, but that certification lapsed when he didn't maintain it, and expired in December.

In addition, he has not been certified by the ABIM in cardiovascular disease.

Meanwhile, the cardiologist has made a claim to concert promoters AEG Live - who arranged Michael's 50-date "This Is It" London residency - for \$300,000 in unpaid fees.

However, according to Randy Phillips, CEO and president of AEG Live, the contract to pay Dr. Murray had not been signed by the singer before his death and so is not valid.

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