

Press Clips

ABMS

“In the News”

September 2009



American Board
of Medical Specialties

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Press Clips, Media & Releases

September 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 September 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) "From Tragedy to Advocacy: A determined breed of patient-safety advocates have forged their personal pain to a dedication to improving medical safety" *Modern Healthcare* – September 7, 2009
- 2) "Bending the Cost Curve: A Critical Component of Health Care Reform" – *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* – September 16, 2009
- 3) "Doctors as the Key to Health Care Reform" – *New England Journal of Medicine* – September 24, 2009

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Press Clips



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ABMS Monthly Media Report September, 2009

Following is a summary of media coverage identified during the months of September 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

Shape

“Finding Dr. Right”

Sept. 2009

This “Live Healthy News” brief gives tips for consumers trying to find a doctor.

ABMS Mention: “1. Check her credentials--To ensure the doctor is qualified and meets the latest standards, confirm that she’s board-certified in internal medicine or family practice. Search for her name on **abms.org**, the Web site of the **American Board of Medical Specialties**.”

A copy of this article is attached--a link is not available.

Story #2

American Medical News

“Warnings Issued About Bogus Board Certifications”

Susan J. Landers

Sept. 1, 2009

This article is about a warning from the American Geriatrics Society (AGS) about an entity calling itself the American College of Geriatrics that is selling fraudulent board certification through the mail. Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal warns physicians and others that Keith Alan Lasko, who lived in Las Vegas and may claim to be a physician, was selling phony certifications to physicians in a variety of medical specialties for \$500 or more and the submission of basic information.

ABMS and Specialty Board Member Mentions: “The geriatric certification being offered is not recognized by the AGS or the **American Board of Medical Specialties** and its member specialty boards, the AGS said in a notice posted on its Web site (www.americangeriatrics.org/news/american-board-of-geriatric-medicine.shtml). The **ABMS** has

approved a geriatric medicine certification offered jointly by the **American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Family Medicine**, as well as certification in geriatric psychiatry offered by the **American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.**”

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/08/31/prsc0901.htm>

Story #3

KNXV-TV (ABC-Phoenix, Ariz.)

ABMS Comment on “Why is it legal? Untrained Doctors Perform Plastic Surgery”

Report by Joe Ducey (Aug. 17, 2009)

Sept. 2, 2009

On Sept. 2 ABMS posted a clarifying comment on this investigative report (included in the daily monitoring report on Aug. 17) about why doctors are allowed to perform procedures outside of their scope of practice and without proper training. While the report stresses for consumers the importance of finding an ABMS Member Board certified doctor, it inaccurately states that ABMS issues board certifications.

ABMS Comment: “This story raises an important issue for consumers--the need to understand how doctors are trained and credentialed. At www.abms.org, consumers can learn if their doctor is certified by one of the **24 Member Boards** that make up the **American Board of Medical Specialties**. These boards certify doctors in specialties ranging from internal medicine to pediatrics to plastic surgery. **ABMS Member Board** certification is widely recognized in healthcare as the gold standard for judging a physician's knowledge, experience and skills within a medical specialty.”

<http://www.abc15.com/content/news/investigators/consumeralerts/story/Why-is-it-legal-Untrained-doctors-perform-plastic/m-B2C6icZ0Snm68QzWAHnA.csp>

Story #4

Marie Claire

“Plastic Surgery Nightmares”

Gretchen Voss

October 2009

This article is about the dangers of having plastic surgery performed by unqualified practitioners and profiles several cases of procedures that went wrong. According to the article, some doctors, reeling from declining insurance reimbursements for their medical services, are recklessly offering discount aesthetic tweaks for which they have no training.

ABMS Mention: “Before signing up for surgery, consider your doctor's credentials...To check your surgeon's credentials, consult with the **American Board of Medical Specialties** (abms.org)...**Board-certified** doctors have at least a year of hands -on experience and have met vigorous industry standards.”

The print version of this story has a slightly different headline--“Doctors Without Borders,” however, the ABMS mention is the same. A scanned version of the print story is attached. A link to the online version is below:

http://www.marieclaire.com/health-fitness/advice/tips/bad-plastic-surgery?click=main_sr

Story #5

Glamour (online)

“The Dos and Don’ts of Researching Your Health Online”

Sarah Jio

August 2009

This article offers tips for consumers who research health information online. The article stresses the importance of seeking information from reputable Web sites, cautions against the dangers of self-diagnosis and suggests consumers always check their doctor's credentials.

ABMS and Specialty Board Member Mentions: “It's tempting to try to compare your skin rash or sore to others online, but don't do it, says Jeffrey Benabio, M.D., a voluntary assistant professor at University of California, San Diego, who's affiliated with the **American Board of Dermatology.**”

“She's nice, but is she qualified to operate on you? Don't leave it to chance....You can also see if your doc is board certified in the areas where she practices medicine by visiting the **American Board of Medical Specialties.**”

http://www.glamour.com/health-fitness/2009/08/the-dos-and-donts-of-researching-your-health-online?mbid=synd_yshine_vg&printable=true

Story #6

American Medical News

“New Specialty Approved for Treating Child Abuse”

Susan J. Landers

Sept. 28, 2009

This article is about the approval of a new specialty for treating child abuse. The article also discusses efforts underway by twelve medical associations, including the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, seeking board specialization for obesity treatment.

ABMS and Specialty Member Board Mentions: “Nearly a decade ago, physicians launched an effort to get the **American Board of Pediatrics** to offer a specialty in child abuse treatment, said Robert W. Block, MD...A lot of work goes into getting a new specialty approved by a member board of the **American Board of Medical Specialties.** ‘There has to be a demonstration to the board that there is a professional and scientific status to this field,’ said **Gail McGuinness, MD, executive vice president of the American Board of Pediatrics, one of 24 ABMS member boards.**”

<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2009/09/28/prsb0928.htm>



amednews.com

American Medical News

PROFESSION

Warnings issued about bogus board certifications

Connecticut's attorney general is investigating a complaint about mail-order geriatrics certifications. Schemes have also involved other medical specialties.

By SUSAN J. LANDERS, *AMNews Staff*. Posted Sept. 1, 2009.

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Follow The American Geriatrics Society

is warning that an entity calling itself the American College of Geriatrics is selling a fraudulent board certification through the mail.

The geriatric certification being offered is not recognized by the AGS or the American Board of Medical Specialties and its member specialty boards, the AGS said in a notice posted on its Web site (www.americangeriatrics.org/news/american_board_of_geriatric_medicine.shtml). X

The ABMS has approved a geriatric medicine certification offered jointly by the American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Board of Family Medicine, as well as certification in geriatric psychiatry offered by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology.

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal began an investigation in his state last April after receiving a complaint from the internal medicine board about the sale of bogus certifications.

Blumenthal warned physicians and others that Keith Alan Lasko, who lived in Las Vegas and may claim to be a physician, was selling phony certifications to physicians in a variety of medical specialties for \$500 or more and the submission of basic information.

"This alleged con artist used false names -- for himself and for fictitious medical boards whose fake certificates he sold," Blumenthal said. The scheme was aimed primarily at foreign-born or foreign-taught physicians who might not be aware of proper certification processes.

"Real and recognized medical board certifications require rigorous examination and education -- not simply payment for a piece of paper," Blumenthal said. "Bogus medical certifications are deceptive and dangerous -- a disservice to the entire medical profession."

Neither Lasko nor the purported American College of Geriatrics could be located for comment.

Physicians who believe they have been offered a fake credential should contact their state attorney general, Blumenthal said.

Since the fake credentials are sent through the U.S. Postal Service, the internal medicine board advises those who receive suspicious solicitations to notify postal inspectors (<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/forms/mailfraudcomplaint.aspx>).

This content was published online only.

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amednews.com

— American Medical News —

PROFESSION

New specialty approved for treating child abuse

Meanwhile, a specialty in obesity care is being developed by 12 medical associations.

By SUSAN J. LANDERS, AMNews staff. Posted Sept. 28, 2009.

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A new medical specialty in

treating child abuse is becoming a reality after years of work by many pediatricians.

Nearly a decade ago, physicians launched an effort to get the American Board of Pediatrics to offer a specialty in child abuse treatment, said Robert W. Block, MD, professor and chair of the Dept. of Pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine.

- [See related content](#)
- Topic: [Obesity epidemic](#)

Several pediatrician members of the Ray Helfer Society -- a group that promotes education and training in the medical aspects of child abuse and neglect -- pushed for the specialty. After one failed petition, the group gained approval from the pediatrics board in 2006.

The first exam in the specialty will be offered at sites around the country on Nov. 16. An estimated 225 physicians are expected to take the test, which will be given on alternate years.

"By January 2010, we should have the first certificates out," Dr. Block said.

85% of licensed physicians in the U.S. have board certificates.

He said there is more knowledge now about child abuse, with thousands of articles and increasing numbers of textbooks on the issue. Supporters of the specialty said such experts are needed to teach medical students and residents about child abuse.

A lot of work goes into getting a new specialty approved by a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties. X

"There has to be a demonstration to the board that there is a professional and scientific status to this field," said Gail McGuinness, MD, executive vice president of the American Board of Pediatrics, one of 24 ABMS member boards.

The boards issue certificates in 37 general specialty and 94 subspecialty areas. Board certificates are held by about 85% of physicians licensed in the U.S.

Fighting obesity

Twelve medical associations, including the American Diabetes Assn., the American Heart Assn., and the American Academy of Pediatrics, are seeking board specialization for obesity treatment. With obesity continuing to take a toll on the nation's health, the organizations have started to develop an exam, which they expect to have ready by March 2010.

About two-thirds of adults and one-third of children and adolescents are overweight or obese, said Robert Kushner, MD, president of the Obesity Society, a group of about 2,000 physicians and researchers. The society is spearheading the board-certification effort.

Two-thirds of U.S. adults and a third of children and teens are overweight or obese.

"In light of the complexity and significance of the problem worldwide, the time is right for training and recognizing physicians who are experts in the care of patients with obesity," said Dr. Kushner, who directs the Comprehensive Center on Obesity at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. "If we develop a group of physicians who are expert, the hope is that they will become the local community opinion leaders and will be able to educate other physicians. They could also serve as a referral base."

Likewise, the child abuse specialty will create needed experts. Dr. Block said the new child abuse treatment specialists also will serve as consultants, educators and researchers. "Hopefully, one of us will be in every school and residency program, and many will be able to speak about community prevention programs. Plus, there is tons of research to be done."

The recognition of a child abuse specialty will allow the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education to approve fellowships in the field. There are about 20 unaccredited fellowships that sprang up in response to the need for expertise in treating child abuse, said Jim Anderst, MD, assistant professor at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., who directs one such fellowship program.

"Board certification is a necessary step," Dr. Anderst said. "As time passes and more research is done, we are gaining a greater understanding of the types of abuse children can suffer, including sexual abuse and neglect. The scope of knowledge for the complex cases in particular is often outside the realm of knowledge of the general practitioner."

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