ABMS Names Recipient of 2017 Health Care Quality and Safety Award

International Clinical Accountability and Patient Care Champion Sir Donald Irvine, CBE, MD, FRCGP, FMedSci, Honored

CHICAGO – November 6, 2017 – The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the leading not-for-profit organization overseeing physician certification in the United States, has awarded Sir Donald Irvine, CBE, MD, FRCGP, FMedSci, its 2017 Health Care Quality and Safety Award. Sir Donald accepted the award in London on October 6.

Established in 2011, the ABMS Health Care Quality and Safety Award recognizes extraordinary national and international contributions to the fields of quality and patient safety, with a particular focus on physician performance, professionalism, and the improvement of clinical performance in practice. Previous honorees include Peter J. Pronovost, MD, and Donald Berwick, MD.

A general practitioner, Sir Donald began his career in 1958 in the mining village of Ashington, Northumberland, first in his father’s practice and then later, as a partner in one of the first multi-disciplinary teaching family practices in the United Kingdom (UK). For approximately 20 years, Sir Donald served as a regional adviser for general practice at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne where he introduced clinical standard setting and medical audits based on peer review, and served as Council Chairman of the Royal College of General Practitioners from 1983 to 1985.

After chairing the General Medical Council (GMC) Professional Standards Committee, Sir Donald served as GMC President, one of the highest medical posts in the UK. Known as the “Doctors’ Judge,” Sir Donald was the first ever general practitioner to serve as GMC President. His role included overseeing the official register of medical practitioners in the UK, designing the current system for ongoing validation and revalidation of physician competence, and establishing the standards for medical schools throughout the country in order to protect, promote, and maintain the health and safety of the public. Sir Donald led the development of “Good Medical Practice,” the national code of professional practice that remains as the basis for medical practice and education in the UK and commonwealth countries.

Sir Donald has played a pivotal role in the advancement of patient-centered care through his role as Chairman of the Picker Institute Board of Trustees in the United States. As a result of his work, he was awarded the Picker Award for Excellence in the Advancement of Patient-Centered Care in 2004. As a
Patron of the Picker Institute Europe, Sir Donald continues to support the Institute’s internationally recognized quality improvement framework and quality measurement both in the United States as well as throughout the UK.

“Sir Donald was an early champion of quality, patient safety, and patient-centered care as a foundation of public trust,” stated Lois Margaret Nora, MD, JD, MBA, ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer. “He has dedicated his career to establishing and enforcing high standards of medical practice with a focus on improving quality and professional accountability for patient safety. Sir Donald leads from example, and his life’s work has left an indelible imprint on the medical profession in the UK and throughout the international community.”

Sir Donald has lectured and written extensively on the topics of general practice, medical education, and medical professionalism. He is the recipient of honorary degrees from six universities in the UK and honorary fellowships from five medical royal colleges, as well as an Honorary Professor at the School of Health at the University of Durham. Appointed as Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 1986, he was knighted in 1994 in recognition of his service to medicine and medical ethics.

“Sir Donald truly exemplifies the lifelong service and characteristics that comprise the ABMS Health Care Quality and Safety Award,” Dr. Nora said. “We are pleased to recognize his dedication to the medical profession and his impact on improving the quality of health care for patients across the globe.”

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About ABMS

Established in 1933, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) continues to be the leading not-for-profit organization overseeing physician certification in the United States. ABMS establishes the standards its 24 Member Boards use to develop and implement educational and professional evaluation, assessment, and certification of physician specialists. More than 880,000 physicians are certified in one or more of the approved 39 specialties and 86 subspecialties offered by the ABMS Member Boards. For more information about ABMS, visit abms.org or call (312) 436-2600.