



**American Board
of Medical Specialties**

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NEWS RELEASE

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AMERICAN BOARD OF MEDICAL SPECIALTIES ANNOUNCES PLAN TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONTINUING BOARD CERTIFICATION: VISION FOR THE FUTURE COMMISSION

ABMS to take immediate action on independent Commission's recommendations to make continuing certification programs more meaningful, relevant and of value to key stakeholders

CHICAGO – March 12, 2019 – The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Board of Directors (BOD) has announced its plans to address the recommendations shared in the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission's (Commission) final report. Presented to the ABMS BOD in mid-February, the Commission's final report is the culmination of research, testimony and public feedback from stakeholders throughout the Boards and greater health care communities. The Commission took all of this input into consideration, developing a set of recommendations to help continuing certification evolve into a meaningful and relevant program that brings both value to a physician's practice and meets the highest standard of quality patient care.

"The ABMS Board of Directors appreciates the diligent, transparent, inclusive and thoughtful approach taken throughout the process by the Commission," said Barry S. Smith, MD, Chair of the ABMS BOD. "As a Community, we are eager to begin implementing the Commission's recommendations that represent the needs of all our stakeholders. We are also committed to maintaining the inclusive nature of the Commission and will work with external stakeholders as well as those within the Boards as we move forward."

The ABMS BOD reviewed the Commission's final report in detail during its February meeting, assessing how best to address the recommendations outlined. The Board agreed to the following as necessary first steps in implementing the Commission's findings:

- Establishment of the "Achieving the Vision for Continuing Board Certification" Oversight Committee charged with directing the implementation strategy. This committee will seek guidance from the ABMS' new Stakeholder Council and various stakeholders in the continuing certification process throughout the implementation.

- Creation of the following four Collaborative Task Forces that will include representatives from professional and state societies and other external stakeholders, focusing on the following areas identified in the Commission’s report:
 - Remediation pathways
 - Professionalism
 - Advancing Practice
 - Information and Data Sharing
- Agreement of all 24 ABMS Member Boards to commit to longitudinal or other formative assessment strategies and offer alternatives to the highly-secure, point-in-time examinations of knowledge.
- Commitment by ABMS to develop new, integrated standards for continuing certification programs by 2020. The standards will address the Commission recommendations for flexibility in knowledge assessment and advancing practice, feedback to diplomates and consistency.
- Establishment of a meeting of the ABMS/Council of Medical Specialty Societies joint Board Leadership to ensure full specialty society engagement in building the road map defined by the Commission report especially with regard to the role of continuing certification in advancing clinical practice.

The Commission’s report affirmed that it is the role of the Boards to make summative decisions about continuing the certification of a physician based on a portfolio of information. However, the Commission called for the Boards to create formative processes that offer opportunities for learning and improvement as well as remediation when necessary before summative decisions are made. And, while the report itself didn’t comment directly on the work the Boards have already undertaken to enhance their programs, many of the Commission’s recommendations affirmed those actions, most notably those referencing alternative formative assessment strategies and improving communications with key stakeholders and diplomates.

“The Commission’s final report conveys that continuing certification programs should bring value and meaning to physicians in helping them with their learning and improvement needs while fulfilling the Boards’ commitment to the public that physicians are maintaining their knowledge and skills and working to continuously improve their practices,” said ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer, Richard E. Hawkins, MD. “The Commission’s recommendations offer a collaborative roadmap for creating a continuing certification system that will ensure that the credential itself remains relevant and meaningful to physicians and the patients they serve well into the next decade and beyond.”

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About ABMS

Established in 1933, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is 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, helping to improve the quality of care to the patients, families and communities we serve. More than 880,000 physicians are certified in one or more of the approved 40 specialties and 87 subspecialties offered by the [ABMS Member Boards](#). For more information about ABMS, visit abms.org or call (312) 436-2600.