

CONTINUING BOARD CERTIFICATION

ACHIEVING *the* VISION

UPDATE

ABMS Affirms its Policy Regarding Use of Certification to Hospital Leaders/Chief Medical Officers

Use of Board Certification, Changes to Continuing Certification Shared

As part of its commitment to address the recommendations made by the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission (Commission) in its final report*, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) distributed a [special communication to hospital and health system leaders](#) across the country. Issued on June 5, 2019, the letter directly addresses the Commission's recommendation that ABMS communicate to hospitals its policy on the appropriate use of board certification in their privileging and credentialing decisions.

The letter from ABMS Board Chair Barry S. Smith, MD, and ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer Richard E. Hawkins, MD, affirms longstanding ABMS policy regarding the use of certification status when rendering a decision about hospital privileges. The letter states that ABMS has always strongly believed that hospitals and health systems should be free, without any legal restraint, to consider certification status when rendering a decision about hospital privileges, trusting those decisions will be based on the individual system's quality and safety needs. However, ABMS also recognizes that certification status is not the only indicator of a physician's quality, and it has been our policy for decades that it is not appropriate to grant or deny privileges solely based on certification status.

In addition to reiterating the established policy, the letter also invites hospitals and physician leaders to learn more about the new approaches to assessment that are transforming continuing board certification in ways that further enhance its value to hospitals. It also includes details regarding the variety of steps ABMS has taken in its plan to implement and operationalize the Commission's recommendations. These include the recent naming of the "Continuing Board Certification: Achieving the Vision" [Oversight Committee, as well the establishment of five collaborative task forces](#) that will work with key external stakeholders to guide ABMS' implementation plan. Task force progress reports and program updates will be shared routinely throughout the implementation process.

* Find resources and follow the progress of ABMS and its 24 Member Boards on the [Achieving the Vision web page](#).

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