



**American Board
of Medical Specialties**

Higher standards. Better care.®

American Board of Medical Specialties

353 North Clark Street, Suite 1400

Chicago, IL 60654

T: (312) 436-2600

F: (312) 436-2700

www.abms.org

American Board of Medical Specialties Statement on the *Journal of the American Medical Association* Research Letter Regarding Member Board Certification Fees and Finances

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and its 24 Member Boards are committed to establishing and maintaining high quality standards for physician specialists. More than 860,000 physicians in the United States are Board Certified by one or more of the 24 ABMS Member Boards. ABMS Board Certification is a recognized benchmark of public trust and represents a physician's personal commitment to providing a high standard of quality patient care.

The research letter entitled "Fees for Certification and Finances of Medical Specialty Boards" published in the August 1, 2017 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* offers an aggregate view of the fees charged by the 24 ABMS Member Boards for more than 860,000 physicians to obtain initial Board Certification, as well as continuing certification throughout a physician's career. According to the letter, the 2013 Member Boards' revenue represents approximately \$313 per ABMS Board Certified physician. This is a reasonable amount to support a nationally recognized credentialing program that is both respected and valued by physicians, health care providers and institutions, and most importantly, patients and their families. In addition, the estimated annual cost for continuing certification of \$257 per ABMS Board Certified physician is an acceptable cost for physicians to demonstrate that they have the current knowledge, judgment, and skills to provide the highest level and most up to date care to their patients.

IRS Form 990 provides information regarding revenues, expenditures and assets. However, they do not outline the actual operation cost involved in creating, sustaining and implementing a rigorous and comprehensive process of Board Certification and continuing certification for the nation's physicians. ABMS Member Boards rely on a highly-trained and specialized workforce including psychometricians, assessment professionals and medical educators to develop, evaluate and administer Board Certification programs. For this reason, the Boards' greatest expenditure is appropriately in the area of staff salary and compensation, as noted in their 990 reports.

The assets reported on the IRS Form 990 that the ABMS Member Boards currently maintain are crucial to sustain and evolve vibrant and innovative Board Certification and continuing certification programs. ABMS Member Boards are continually reinvesting in program improvements and enhancements to transform their certification and continuing certification programming, including the development of quality improvement and longitudinal assessment programs. These investments will ensure that ABMS Board Certification continues to be a relevant, valued and important quality indicator for those who hold the credential, as well as those who rely upon it for the highest standard of quality care.