

# ACHIEVING *the* VISION

## The Recommendations of the Vision Initiative Commission

February 2019

The Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission (Commission), convened as part of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Vision Initiative, presented a final report to the ABMS Board of Directors in February 2019. The independent Commission's report is the culmination of research, testimony, and public feedback from stakeholders throughout the Member Boards and greater health care communities. It contains 14 recommendations that address current concerns and outline a path forward for ABMS' continuing certification programs. The following recommendations are prioritized into three stages: one foundational, 10 short-term and intermediate, and three aspirational.

- 1 Integration of professionalism, assessment, lifelong learning and advancing practice.
- 2 Alternative solutions to burdensome highly-secure, point-in-time examinations of knowledge.
- 3 Regularly communicate with their diplomates about the standards for the specialty and encourage feedback about the program.
- 4 Consistent processes and requirements for continuing certification that are fair, equitable, transparent, effective and efficient.
- 5 Enable multi-specialty and subspecialty diplomates to remain certified without duplication of effort.
- 6 Facilitate and encourage independent research to build on the evidence base about the value of continuing certification.
- 7 ABMS Boards must change a diplomate's certification status when continuing certification standards are not met.
- 8 Clearly defined remediation pathways.
- 9 Make publicly available the certification history of all diplomates.
- 10 Member Boards comply with all ABMS certification and organizational standards.
- 11 Demonstrate and communicate that continuing certification has value, meaning and purpose in the health care environment.
- 12 Seek input from other stakeholder organizations to develop consistent approaches to evaluate professionalism and professional standing.
- 13 Collaborate to develop the infrastructure to support learning activities that produce data-driven advances in clinical practice.
- 14 Collaborate with professional and/or CME/CPD organizations to share data and information to guide and support diplomate engagement.

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# ABMS Announces Plan to Implement Vision Commission Recommendations

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March 2019

**The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Board of Directors (BOD) announced its plans to address the recommendations shared in the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission's (Commission) final report released in February 2019. 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:**

- Creation of the "Achieving the Vision for Continuing Board Certification" Oversight Committee charged with directing the implementation strategy. This committee will seek guidance from 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 external stakeholders, focusing on the following areas identified in the Commission's report:
  - Advancing Practice
  - Information and Data Sharing
  - Professionalism
  - Remediation Pathways
- 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. A fifth task force will be convened to update the standards.

The Commission's report affirmed that it is the role of the ABMS Member 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 did not 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.

Follow the progress of ABMS and its Member Boards and sign up for email updates at [vision.abms.org](https://www.vision.abms.org)

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## ABMS Names Oversight Committee for Vision Initiative

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May 2019

In May, ABMS named the members of the Continuing Board Certification: Achieving the Vision Oversight Committee.

The Oversight Committee will lead the implementation of the recommendations outlined by the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission in its February report.

Selected based on their expertise, knowledge, and understanding of the Commission's report, and their leadership positions in the ABMS Member Boards' community, the members of the Oversight Committee are:

- Larry A. Green, MD, Chair-Elect, ABMS Board of Directors
- Richard E. Hawkins, MD, ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer
- Carolyn L. Kinney, MD, Executive Director, American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- Michael R. Nelson, MD, PhD, President, American Board of Allergy and Immunology, Vision Commission Member
- George D. Wendel Jr., MD, Executive Director, American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vision Commission Member

The Oversight Committee will be chaired by ABMS Board Chair Barry S. Smith, MD. The Committee will seek guidance from the ABMS Stakeholder Council and various stakeholders in the continuing certification process to help direct the work of the following five task forces as part of the Achieving the Vision implementation plan: Advancing Practice, Information and Data Sharing, Professionalism, Remediation, and Standards. While the Standards Task Force will be composed of members of the ABMS Board of Directors and the ABMS Committee on Continuing Certification, the other four task forces will be composed of representatives from various external stakeholders in the continuing certification process as well as ABMS Member Boards.



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# Continuing Board Certification: Achieving the Vision Task Forces Named

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July 2019

ABMS announced the members of the five Continuing Board Certification: Achieving the Vision Task Forces. With guidance from the named Oversight Committee, these Task Forces will work to implement key recommendations outlined by the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission (Commission) in its final report. Members were selected for their expertise, knowledge, and representation of a broad stakeholder community. Members of the Task Forces, which also include a liaison from the ABMS Stakeholder Council, are as follows:

## Task Forces and Their Members

### Advancing Practice

Engaging specialty societies, the continuing medical education and continuing professional development communities, and other expert stakeholders, the Task Force members will identify practice environmental changes necessary to support learning and improvement activities that produce data-driven advances in physicians' clinical practice.

- Warren P. Newton, MD, MPH (Chair)
- Maryanne C. Bombaugh, MD, MBA
- Deborah J. Culley, MD
- Anne-Marie Irani, MD
- Rebecca L. Johnson, MD
- Samuel M. Keim, MD
- Bruce A. Nitsche, MD
- Cynthia D. Smith, MD
- Steven C. Thornquist, MD
- Carol A. Berkowitz, MD (Stakeholder Council liaison)

### Information and Data Sharing

Members of this Task Force will make recommendations regarding the processes and infrastructure necessary to facilitate data and information sharing between ABMS Member Boards and key stakeholders to support development of future educational and assessment programs and activities.

- Richard P. Dutton, MD, MBA (Chair)
- Ulysses G. J. Balis, MD
- Beth A. Bortz, MPP
- Patricia J. Hicks, MD, MHPE
- Dominic H. Mack, MD, MBA
- Brian Nussenbaum, MD, MHCM
- Suzann Y. Pershing, MD, MS
- Kevin L. Rode, BBA, PMP
- Randall K. Roenigk, MD
- Diane Meldi, MBA (Stakeholder Council liaison)

### Professionalism

Dedicated to address the aspirational Commission recommendation calling for ABMS and its Member Boards to develop approaches to evaluate professionalism and professional standing, members of this Task Force will work with other stakeholder organizations to explore approaches to future assessment of professionalism and enhance consistency in judgments regarding professional standing.

### Professionalism (Continued)

- Christie L. Morgan, MD, MS (Chair)
- Carol Cronin, MSG, MSW
- Thomas W. Hess, JD
- Valerie P. Jackson, MD
- Mark T. Keegan, MB, BCH
- Eve M. Kurtin, PharmD, MBA
- Bhushan H. Pandya, MD, MAMC
- Katherine D. Sherif, MD
- Christopher R. Thomas, MD
- Frederic W. Hafferty, PhD (Stakeholder Council liaison)

### Remediation

This Task Force will define aspects and suggest pathways for remediation of gaps prior to certification loss as well as pathways for regaining eligibility after loss of certification.

- Suzanne K. Woods, MD (Chair)
- Eva M. Aagaard, MD
- David E.J. Bazzo, MD
- Ole-Petter Hamnvik, MD, BCH
- Walter H. Merrill, MD
- John C. Moorhead, MD, MS
- James C. Puffer, MD
- James A. Sliwa, DO
- David A. Swankin, JD, MS
- Donald J. Palmisano, Jr., JD (Stakeholder Council liaison)

### Standards

This Task Force will develop new continuing certification standards, consistent with the Commission's recommendations, which will be implemented by the ABMS Member Boards. Members will obtain appropriate input from stakeholders including practicing physicians.

- Michael L. Ritchey, MD (Chair)
- Richard G. Battaglia, MD
- Elizabeth G. Baxley, MD
- Daniel J. Cole, MD
- David G. Nichols, MD, MBA
- Susan M. Ramin, MD
- Earl J. Reisdorff, MD
- Ricardo Correa-Marquez, MD, EsD (Stakeholder Council liaison)

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## Council to Work with Oversight Committee, Task Forces

### *ABMS Stakeholder Council Holds First In-person Meeting in May 2019*

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In May 2019, the ABMS Stakeholder Council held its first in-person meeting in Chicago. Providing feedback on several recommendations from the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission report, and determining how best to contribute to the work of the task forces charged with implementing those recommendations, were the focus of the meeting.

Formed in October 2018, the Stakeholder Council is an advisory body representing the interests of physicians, patients and the public. It was established to ensure that the decisions of the ABMS Board of Directors are grounded in an understanding of the perspectives, concerns, and interests of the multiple constituents impacted by ABMS' work. The Council also will provide guidance to the Achieving the Vision Oversight Committee as it rolls out the Achieving the Vision implementation plan.

At the May meeting, Council members discussed how ABMS and its Member Boards can effectively communicate the evolving process of continuing certification that better balances learning and assessment in enhancing its value to physicians while meeting the needs of the public for a meaningful credential. Regarding the task forces, the Council members advocated for, and established a model for, the appointment of a non-voting Council liaison to each task force. During an open discussion session, Council members identified issues that they believe are an important part of their charge. Among them were sharing research, promoting best practices for new/emerging technologies, developing novel assessment techniques, aligning continuing certification activities with national reporting and licensure requirements, strengthening relationships between boards and specialty societies, and engaging in patient advocacy.

#### **In addition to the ABMS officer members, the Stakeholder Council includes:**

##### **Active Diplomates**

- Nels Carlson, MD (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation)
- Charles Cutler, MD (Internal Medicine)
- Rachel Dawkins, MD (Pediatrics)
- Nitika Gupta, MBBS, DCH, DNB, MRCPCH (Pediatric Transplant Hepatology)
- Julius Hamilton, MD (Anesthesiology)
- Caitlin Hicks, MD, MS (Surgery)
- Diane Reis, MD, MPH (Psychiatry)
- Joel Schuman, MD (Ophthalmology)
- Mark Shaffrey, MD (Neurological Surgery)
- John Patrick Walker, MD (Surgery)

##### **At-Large Members**

- Marianne Gausche-Hill, MD (Emergency Medicine, Pediatric Emergency Medicine)
- Kevin Murphy, MD (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine)

##### **Associate Members**

- Carol Berkowitz, MD (Pediatrics)
- Ricardo Correa Marquez, MD, EsD (Internal Medicine, Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism)
- Cynthia Jumper, MD, MPH (Internal Medicine, Critical Care Medicine/Pulmonary Disease/Hospice and Palliative Care)(Chair)
- Melissa Margolis, PhD
- Tracey Milligan, MD, MS (Neurology, Epilepsy)

##### **Credentialing Community Representative**

- Diane Meldi, MBA, CPCS, CPMSM

##### **Public Members**

- Donald Elliman
- Frederic Hafferty, PhD
- Rebecca LeBuhn, MA
- Marci Nielsen, MPH, PhD
- Amy Ohmer
- Donald Palmisano Jr., JD



## Sometimes You Just Don't Know

March 2019

*By Donald J. Palmisano Jr.,  
Executive Director,  
Medical Association of Georgia*

Sometimes, you just don't know what you don't know. That was the case for me when it came to Maintenance of Certification (MOC).

Shortly after Georgia became the second state to pass a law limiting MOC's applicability in 2017, I was approached by several key stakeholders during the American Medical Association's annual meeting - keeping in mind that I chaired the American Association of Medical Society Executives' (AAMSE's) State CEO Committee at the time. This included Cathy Rydell, the CEO of the American Academy of Neurology, and Hal Lawrence, MD, the former CEO of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

They wanted to see if there was a way to streamline the patchwork of state laws that were being passed to limit MOC's applicability - and it was the first time, at least that I could recall, that the national specialty societies showed a real interest in working with the state medical societies in this kind of cooperative way.

The American Board of Medical Specialties' (ABMS') Board of Directors subsequently called for the formation of the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Initiative to reform MOC. I was honored to represent the Medical Association of Georgia and AAMSE as a member of the Vision Commission.

Following a lot of preparation - including attending seminars to understand the role of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, Federation of State Medical Boards, and others - the first face-to-face meeting of the Vision Commission took place in the first quarter of 2018. Its 27 members included representatives of some of the ABMS Member Boards, national specialties, state medical societies, private practice physicians, and patients.

Knowing how unpopular MOC has been with physicians in Georgia, I walked into my first Vision Commission meeting ready for a good fight - ready to be a zealous advocate for my constituents. I saw ABMS and its Boards as bureaucrats who had committed an injustice on the medical profession. There was no way anybody was changing my mind.

But it didn't take too long for my blood pressure to drop. ABMS gave a great presentation on MOC that included a balanced and wide array of perspectives, including those of practicing physicians. Everybody in the room had an opportunity to weigh in, and ABMS genuinely listened. The takeaway was clear: practicing physicians did not see value in MOC in its current form.

It also didn't take long for me to realize that there also had been a lot of finger-pointing and poor communications going on within the House of Medicine when it came to MOC. And the relationship between the ABMS Boards and the diplomates effectively ended once initial certification was done. It was easy to see why physicians were frustrated and didn't see any value in MOC.

At the end of the literal and figurative day, ABMS accepted the stakeholder feedback as reality. They owned it. And with each passing day, I became more convinced that the diverse group of people who served on the Vision Commission shared a common goal - which was doing what's best for physicians and their patients.

I now have a greater appreciation for not knowing what I didn't know going into that first Vision Commission meeting. We are all naturally cynical, but I admit that I should have been more open-minded and less emotional. I am convinced that the biggest problem with MOC has been a breakdown in communication, which is something that I hope and believe we can fix in the coming months and years.

It will take some time, but I also genuinely believe that physicians will be pleased with the changes that are taking place in "continuing certification." The Vision Commission's final report is the result of a lot of hard work and it represents a lot of diverse perspectives.

I would like to thank ABMS and its Member Boards for listening and taking the action that they have. I am proud to have been part of the process, and I support the Vision Commission report's findings and recommendations in full.

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