

CERTIFICATION IN ADVANCED HEART FAILURE AND TRANSPLANT CARDIOLOGY

BACKGROUND

Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification, developed by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), is designed to recognize the qualifications of physicians who have met ABIM standards for specialists in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology. This certification encompasses the special knowledge and skills required of cardiologists for evaluating and optimally managing patients with heart failure, particularly those with advanced heart failure; those with devices, including ventricular assist devices; and those who have undergone or are awaiting transplantation. Participation in the certification program is voluntary. Certification is not required of practitioners in this field, and the certificate does not confer privilege to practice.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

To achieve Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification, you must hold **current, valid ABIM certification in Cardiovascular Disease** at the time of application for the examination and fulfill all of the following requirements:

- Satisfactory completion of formal training or substantiation of requisite practice experience;
- Substantiation by local authorities of your clinical competence, procedural skills, and moral and ethical behavior in the clinical setting;
- Hold a valid, unrestricted and unchallenged license to practice medicine; and
- Pass the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination.

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

For the first three examinations in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology (2010, 2012 and 2014), ABIM will offer two pathways for admission – a practice pathway and a training pathway. The practice pathway will **not** be available to diplomates who complete fellowship training after June 30, 2011. After 2014, all first-time applicants must fulfill the requirements of the training pathway for Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification.

PRACTICE PATHWAY

If you hold current, valid ABIM Cardiovascular Disease Certification and have not completed formal training in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology, you will be eligible to apply for the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination in 2012 or 2014 if, at the time of application, you can meet each of the following requirements:

- Demonstrate that for at least three out of the past five years of practice, including the year prior to application for the exam, you spent either 40% of your post-training clinical practice time or 25% of your total post-training professional time in the discipline of advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology.
- Attest to having satisfactory clinical competence specifically in the following areas:
 - Care of patients who are being considered for, or who require, device-based heart failure management (e.g., implantable cardioverter-defibrillators, cardiac resynchronization therapy, monitoring devices and mechanical circulatory support devices);
 - Management of patients before and **after** heart transplantation; and
 - Multidisciplinary care involving both specialists (electrophysiologists, cardiac surgeons, transplant personnel) and primary care clinicians.
- Have the above practice experience and clinical competencies electronically attested to by the program director of an accredited training program in cardiovascular disease affiliated with the hospital where you spend the majority of your clinical time or by the Chief of Cardiology (or equivalent) in the hospital where you spend the majority of your clinical time.

TRAINING PATHWAY

To be eligible for admission to the examination through the training pathway, you must hold current, valid ABIM Cardiovascular Disease Certification and satisfactorily complete four years of training:

- 36 months of accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship, including 24 months of full-time clinical training,
- Plus 12 months of clinical advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training.
- Advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training **cannot** be used to fulfill the requirements if that training has been credited toward the required 36 months of cardiovascular disease training. Total training must be four years.

The advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training must also meet the following criteria:

- Until the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) establishes accreditation for programs in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology, training must be conducted within an institution that has an ACGME-accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship program. Once ACGME-approved programs are established, fellowship training must be undertaken in programs accredited by the ACGME (currently estimated to be July 1, 2012).

TRAINING PATHWAY, CONTINUED

- For those institutions without a cardiac transplant center, program directors will need to establish a documented relationship with a transplant center at an affiliated institution in order to provide trainees with the required experience in the evaluation and management of pre-and post-operative cardiac transplant patients.

CLINICAL COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

ABIM will require substantiation of your clinical competence as an advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology consultant by your training program director, as well as affirmation that you are in good standing in the medical community.

CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination is a comprehensive one-day examination of multiple-choice questions in the single best answer format with an absolute standard for passing. The ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination blueprint includes the content areas covered, their relative percentages and the approximate number of questions for each content area to be included on a typical examination. For the most up-to-date information on what is included in the examination, go to www.abim.org and choose Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology under “Get Information by Specialty.”

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AND REGISTRATION

The ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination is administered via computer and was offered for the first time in the fall of 2010 and will be offered biennially in the fall thereafter. Because seat availability at centers may be limited, early registration is encouraged.

- Registration for the examination will be open from March 1 through May 1 of the year of the examination, and late registration is open from May 2 through June 1.
- A non-refundable late fee will be added for applications received during the late registration period.
- Applications will not be accepted after June 1.
- To register for the examination, go to the Physician Login at www.abim.org during the general or late registration period.
- After registering, you will receive a letter from ABIM authorizing you to schedule a test center appointment with Pearson VUE, the company that administers the exam.

RECOGNITION OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMATES

Upon successful completion of the requirements for Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology, you will be awarded an ABIM Certification in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology. Certification status is reported at www.abim.org and at the website of the American Board of Medical Specialties, www.abms.org.

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

To be eligible to renew your ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification, you must hold current, valid ABIM certification in Cardiovascular Disease and complete the Maintenance of Certification program. Additional information about the requirements for Maintenance of Certification is posted at www.abim.org.

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