

## CERTIFICATION IN HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

### BACKGROUND

Certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine was developed collaboratively by the following member Boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties: American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA), American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM), American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG), American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR), American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN), American Board of Radiology (ABR) and American Board of Surgery (ABS).

Certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine is designed to recognize the qualifications of physicians who are specialists in the care of the seriously ill and dying patients with life-limiting illnesses. This certification encompasses the expanding scientific knowledge and skills required for symptom management when cure is not possible and appropriate care during the last months of life. The examination is administered to candidates from each Board at the same time in the same testing centers. 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 Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification, you must hold **current, valid ABIM certification in Internal Medicine or a subspecialty** at the time of application for the examination and fulfill all of the following requirements:

- Satisfactory completion of the requisite practice experience or formal training requirements;
- Substantiation by local authorities of your clinical competence and moral and ethical behavior in the clinical setting;
- Hold a valid, unrestricted and unchallenged license to practice medicine; and
- Pass the Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Examination.

*Note: Diplomates of other ABMS Boards should contact those Boards for information regarding certification requirements.*

## PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

### PRACTICE PATHWAY

If you have not completed 12 months of formal fellowship training in hospice and palliative medicine, you will be eligible to apply for the Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Examination in 2012 by fulfilling the requirements of either of two Practice Pathways.

For the 2012 exam administration, those who complete training after June 30, 2010 or do not hold certification from the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (ABHPM) as described below, **cannot** apply through the Practice Pathways and must fulfill the requirements of the Training Pathway.

#### Practice Pathway A:

Practice Pathway A is open to candidates who have been in practice for a minimum of 24 months at the time of application and who:

- Demonstrate at least 800 hours of clinical involvement in subspecialty-level practice of hospice and palliative medicine during the last five years prior to application for examination including:
  - at least two years of practice experience
  - participation in the active care of at least 50 terminally ill patients or patients requiring palliative care (25 for pediatrics)
  - at least 100 hours of formal participation with an interdisciplinary hospice or palliative care team that has all of the following characteristics:
    - (a) provides active clinical care;
    - (b) holds regular meetings;
    - (c) has regular membership of a physician, nurse and at least one other professional from a psychosocial discipline; and
    - (d) operates in a context in which a substantial number of the team's patients are near the end of life. It is expected that multidisciplinary team members will be appropriately trained and ultimately certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine.
- Substantiate practice experience on a "Form Attesting Hospice and Palliative Care Practice" signed by your Hospice Medical Director and a member of your interdisciplinary hospice or palliative care team.

#### Practice Pathway B:

- Practice Pathway B is open to candidates with certification by the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (ABHPM) expiring December 31, 2007 or later. ABIM will independently verify ABHPM diplomate status.

## TRAINING PATHWAY

The training pathway involves satisfactory completion of 12 months of clinical hospice and palliative medicine fellowship training. Hospice and palliative medicine fellowship training time which was credited toward training requirements for any other ABIM examination (e.g., the ABIM Geriatric Medicine Certification Examination or the ABIM Medical Oncology Certification Examination) **cannot** be used to fulfill training requirements for admission to the Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Examination through the training pathway.

- Hospice and palliative medicine fellowship training undertaken prior to July 1, 2010 must have been conducted within an accredited residency or fellowship program.
- Hospice and palliative medicine fellowship training undertaken July 1, 2010 and thereafter must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

## CLINICAL COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS

ABIM will require substantiation by your training program director affirming that your clinical competence as a hospice and palliative medicine consultant is satisfactory.

## CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The ABIM Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Examination is a comprehensive one-day computer-based examination of multiple-choice questions in the single-best-answer format with an absolute standard for passing. The examination will assess your knowledge and clinical judgment in aspects of hospice and palliative medicine required to demonstrate at a high level of competence. The Hospice and Palliative Medicine 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 about what is included in the examination, go to [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org) and choose Hospice and Palliative Medicine under “Get Information by Specialty.”

## EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AND REGISTRATION

The computer-based Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Examination is offered in the fall of even-numbered years. Because seat availability at centers may be limited, early registration is encouraged.

- Registration for the examination is open from March 1 through May 1 of the year of the examination, and late registration is open from May 2 through June 1 of the year of the examination.
- A non-refundable late fee will be added to 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](http://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.

*Diplomates of the ABA, ABEM, ABFM, ABOG, ABP, ABPMMR, ABPN, ABR and ABS must apply for the examination through these Boards.*

## RECOGNITION OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMATES

Upon successful completion of the requirements for Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification, you will be awarded an ABIM Certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Certification status is reported at [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org) and at the website of the American Board of Medical Specialties, [www.abms.org](http://www.abms.org).

*Note: Diplomates of the ABA, ABEM, ABFM, ABOG, ABP, ABPMR, ABPN, ABR and ABS will be recognized by these Boards.*

## MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

To be eligible to renew your ABIM Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification, you must hold current, valid ABIM certification in Internal Medicine or a subspecialty and complete the Maintenance of Certification program. Additional information about the requirements of Maintenance of Certification is posted at [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org).

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## HAVE QUESTIONS?

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ABIM is one of 24 medical specialty boards that make up the  
American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

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