

# AMERICAN BOARD OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

## HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE MEDICINE

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

Effective April 2007

The Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certification Program, developed by the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM), the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), the American Board of Anesthesiology (ABA), the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG), the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR), the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN), the American Board of Radiology (ABR), and the American Board of Surgery, (ABS), is designed to recognize excellence among physicians who are specialists in the care of seriously ill and dying patients with life-limiting illness. The field of hospice and palliative medicine is based on expanding scientific knowledge about symptom control when cure is not possible and appropriate care during the last months of life. The major competencies of subspecialist-level hospice and palliative medicine fall under the broad patient-centered goals of:

- relieving suffering and improving the quality of life for patients and families with life-threatening illness,
- helping patient and family cope well with loss and engage in effective grieving,
- comprehensive interdisciplinary team management of the physical, psychosocial, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families,
- managing and coordination of the array of challenging problems associated with end-of-life care, including the management of the immediately dying patient, and,
- promoting closure and the possibility of growth at the end of life.

The examination will be administered to candidates from the ABIM, ABA, ABEM, ABFM, ABOG, ABP, ABPMR, ABPN, ABR, and ABS 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.

#### **GENERAL**

The American Board of Emergency Medicine has adopted general criteria for certification in a subspecialty which include the following:

- 1) The physician must be a diplomate in good standing of the American Board of Emergency Medicine. The diplomate's primary certificate must be valid in order for the subspecialty certificate to remain valid.
- 2) The physician must fulfill the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure.
- 3) ABEM must be able to obtain verification of clinical competence in Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

## **APPLICATION PATHWAYS**

There are two application pathways for the certification examination in Hospice and Palliative Medicine: a practice pathway and a training pathway.

### **Hospice and Palliative Medicine Practice Pathway**

For the first five years, and the first three examinations (2008, 2010, 2012), ABEM diplomates who have not completed 12 months of formal fellowship training in Hospice and Palliative Medicine will be eligible to apply for the Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification examination if, at the time of application for examination, they can

- 1) 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, 24 months, and 100 hours of participation with a hospice or palliative care team<sup>1</sup>, and
  - participation in the active care of at least 50 terminally ill patients (25 for pediatrics),

OR

- 2) provide documentation of current certification by the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

This pathway of application closes on the last day of the application cycle for the 2012 subspecialty examination. Physicians may submit applications using this pathway postmarked through the last day of the application cycle for the 2012 subspecialty examination.

<sup>1</sup> *To qualify, interdisciplinary hospice or palliative care teams must have all of the following characteristics: (a) provide active clinical care, (b) hold regular meetings, (c) have regular membership of a physician, nurse, and at least one other professional from a psychosocial discipline, and (d) operate 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.*

## **Hospice and Palliative Medicine Training Pathway**

The training pathway for ABEM candidates requires 12 months of satisfactorily completed Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship training<sup>2</sup> which meets the following criteria:

- 1) Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship training undertaken July 1, 2010, and after must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship training taken prior to July 1, 2010, must be conducted within a program affiliated with an ACGME-accredited residency or fellowship program.
- 2) Training experience must be consistent with guidelines established by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), or, until formal guidelines are developed by the ACGME, by the guidelines of the Palliative Medicine Review Committee (PMRC) which is closely modeled after ACGME's Residency Review Committees.
- 3) The ABEM will require substantiation by the training program director that the fellow's clinical competence as a hospice and palliative medicine consultant is satisfactory.

<sup>2</sup> *Hospice and Palliative Medicine fellowship training which was credited toward the training requirements for admission to any other ABEM examination, cannot be used to fulfill the training requirements for admission to the Hospice and Palliative Medicine Examination.*

## **CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION**

The Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification examination will be a comprehensive one-day computer-delivered examination of multiple choice questions in the single best answer format. The examination will assess the candidate's knowledge and clinical judgment in aspects of hospice and palliative medicine required to perform at a high level of competence.

## **RECOGNITION OF SUCCESSFUL DIPLOMATES**

Successful ABEM diplomates will be awarded an ABEM subspecialty certificate in Hospice and Palliative Medicine, valid for ten years. Certification will be reported to the American Board of Medical Specialties.

## **MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION**

To be eligible for renewal of ABEM certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine, diplomates must hold a valid certificate in Emergency Medicine and complete the requirements of the ABEM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. Additional information about MOC requirements is posted on the ABEM website at [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org).

## **EXAMINATION REGISTRATION**

The Hospice and Palliative Medicine certification examination will be administered via computer and will be offered biennially. The first examination will be offered on October 29, 2008. Registration for the examination extends from March 1 through June 1 of the year of the examination. Applications from ABEM candidates will not be accepted after June 1 of the year of examination.

ABEM candidates may register for the examination through the ABEM website at [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org), during the registration period. Diplomates of ABIM, ABA, ABFM, ABOG, ABP, ABPMR, ABPN, ABR, and ABS must apply and register for the examination through those boards.