FROM THE PRESIDENT

Every organization in our specialty plays an important role, whether its primary focus is advocacy (body), education (heart), or research (mind). Arguably, one of the important roles of ABEM is to define our specialty’s identity (soul), namely that which differentiates emergency physician specialists from other physicians who work in an emergency department. As ABEM approaches its 40th birthday, we are challenging ourselves to reassess how we approach recertifying physicians in our specialty.

ABEM believes that the purpose of initial certification is different than that of continuing certification. Because initial certification must objectively and independently confirm that a physician who completes an Emergency Medicine (EM) residency can demonstrate core knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to practice EM at the highest standards, initial certification will continue to use a secure, high-stakes assessment process. Initial certification is an assessment of a physician’s learning.

The purpose of continuing certification is to help physicians become better doctors. This purpose requires ABEM to be in partnership with EM specialists; to assist physicians in

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From the President continued

maintaining core knowledge, judgment, and skills; and to help physicians integrate new medical advances in patient-centered care. To accomplish this, ABEM will still use assessment, but that assessment will be designed to help the physician learn—it will be assessment for the purpose of learning. This philosophical shift redirects ABEM from the ConCert Exam (an assessment of learning) to MyEMCert (an assessment for learning).

This transformation of ABEM’s philosophy of recertification was not developed by ABEM in isolation; it was based on robust feedback from ABEM-certified physicians. We listened to representatives from all major EM organizations at a Summit sponsored by ABEM last year. ABEM then held 25 separate phone conferences with state ACEP chapters, and the leadership of AAEM to listen to their ideas. We then sought the input of every single ABEM-certified physician and heard from nearly 13,000 diplomates who responded to a survey regarding what they thought an alternative recertification process might look like. It only makes sense that our identity as a specialty should come from our specialists.

Since that time, the ConCert Alternative and Modifications (CAM) Task Force has been working to change the ConCert Exam. The CAM Task Force is chaired by O. John Ma, M.D., and includes some of the most talented and creative physicians in our specialty. As you might imagine there are a multitude of details that go into designing a new assessment, and the Task Force has, in just over a half year, considered a variety of assessment formats and a number of aspects, ranging from length, security, format, content, references, and frequency. The pros and cons are being carefully weighed in terms of relevance and convenience, while preserving the value of ABEM certification. All of this gives me tremendous confidence that the final product will be high quality.
What Has Been Identified So Far

Starting in 2019, ConCert will be offered twice per year, in the spring and in the fall. Having the exam available more than once per year was something that we heard consistently in feedback from ABEM-certified physicians. In addition, by 2020, there will be some form of reference material available with the exam so physicians can look up information.

Based on feedback from diplomates, two goals of the alternative to the ConCert Exam, MyEMCert, are to be as clinically relevant as possible to emergency physicians, and to assist in professional development by learning about recent developments in EM.

MyEMCert will be composed of a number of short assessments, or modules, with each module on a defined category (for example, trauma and bleeding). Each module will include case-based clinical assessments, as well as assessments based on current advances in EM. The modules will be available remotely and references can be used. Unlike LLSA tests, however, MyEMCert modules must be taken alone, without consultation or collaboration with other physicians.

MyEMCert will be piloted in 2020 and begin to be phased in in 2021. ABEM-certified physicians have already been asking whether they can participate in the pilot or if they can use MyEMCert in order to recertify; those specifics are still being worked on. Details about eligibility to participate in the pilot will be forthcoming. FAQs about the alternative are available on the ABEM website (www.abem.org). Click on “Stay Certified” and then “ConCert Exam.”
ABEM Maintenance of Certification Program

MOC requirements are available on your Personal Page. Go to www.abem.org and sign in using your User ID and Password. If you have any questions, email moc@abem.org, or call 517-332-4800, ext. 383.

Purpose of Continuing Certification

During its review of the ABEM MOC Program, the Board of Directors approved the following statement about continuing certification:

_The purpose of continuing certification is to maintain the highest standards of Emergency Medicine by partnering with physicians in their ongoing professional development; maintaining core knowledge, judgment, and skills; and integrating new medical advances in patient-centered care._

The Board believes that continuing certification assists physicians in realizing their intrinsic desire to be better clinicians, and deliver safe, high-quality care.

ConCert Alternative: MyEMCert

The ConCert Exam is the current way for physicians to show that they continue to possess the knowledge and cognitive skills of an ABEM-certified emergency physician. In 2020, an alternate way to demonstrate these competencies, MyEMCert, will be piloted. MyEMCert will consist of:

- **Shorter, more frequent test modules.** Each module will assess one or more specific content areas relevant to the clinical practice of Emergency Medicine, such as cardiovascular disorders or trauma. The modules will be about an hour long.

- **The ability to take a module again if it’s not passed the first time.** Additional opportunities will be available to retake and pass a module. Feedback will be provided to give physicians a clearer idea of the topics they need to review.

- **Physicians will take the modules remotely and have access to references.**

ABEM talked with emergency physicians across the country and developed an alternative that integrates many of their ideas. ABEM put a high priority on providing physicians flexibility, enhanced relevancy, and greater opportunities to maintain certification. As this program moves forward, ABEM will continue to reach out to emergency physicians for their ideas.

In summary:

- **In 2020,** MyEMCert will be piloted
- **In 2021,** MyEMCert will begin to be phased in

ABEM is working to determine the first year in which a physician could be recertified using MyEMCert. FAQs about the alternative are available on the ABEM website (www.abem.org). Click on “Stay Certified” and then “ConCert Exam.”
ConCert Modifications

The ConCert Exam will continue to be administered and will remain an option to maintain certification for the foreseeable future. EM physicians have recommended modifications to the exam. Two that have been approved are (1) the exam will be administered twice per year, once in the spring and again in the fall; and (2) by 2020 resource(s) will be available during the exam.

Many physicians have already registered to take the 2019 spring ConCert Exam.

Does Your Certification Expire in 2018?

Complete your MOC requirements by December 31, 2018, to renew your certification. In addition to passing the ConCert Exam, all LLSA, Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP), and CME requirements must be completed by the end of the year.

Does Your Certification Expire in 2023?

You have MOC requirements due by December 31, 2018. By that date, you must have passed 4 LLSA tests, completed and attested to an average of 25 AMA PRA Category 1™ Credits per year, and completed and attested to 1 Practice Improvement activity.

If you do not complete your unmet MOC requirements by this date, you will not lose your ABEM certification. However, ABEM is required to designate and publicly report that you are “not participating in MOC.”

To view your requirements, go to www.abem.org, and sign in using your User ID and Password.
Taking the ConCert Exam Early Does Not Reset Certification Date

ABEM-certified physicians can take the ConCert Exam during the last five years of certification. While all other MOC requirements must be completed to maintain certification, they are not a prerequisite to taking the ConCert Exam. Taking and passing the exam early does not result in a change in your certification expiration date.

Many physicians are taking advantage of this feature. Of the 2,666 2018 takers, 1,065 (40 percent) took the exam early (before their certification expiration year). The figure below breaks down early takers as a percentage of total takers by the number of years prior to their certification expiration date.
When will I receive my new certificate?

ABEM-certified physicians who have met all their ABEM MOC requirements begin a new 10-year certification cycle on January 1, immediately following the expiration of their previous certification. Paper certificates are mailed near the end of the calendar year to those who have completed all of their requirements in the year in which their current certification expires. Certificates are mailed later to those who complete their requirements near the end of the year. Your certification status on your MOC Personal Page will display your new certification date only after your current certification expires. At any time, you can print a letter verifying that you are ABEM certified and the date that your current certification expires. This letter, which is also available from your Personal Page, can be used to support any privileging or credentialing activities prior to receiving your new certificate. By January 1, after the date your current certificate expires, the letter will be updated to include your new certification date.

If you have any questions, please call ABEM at 517-332-4800, ext. 383, or email moc@abem.org.

Did you just certify or recertify? Claim CME at No Cost

Beginning in 2018, physicians who become certified (pass the ABEM Oral Certification Examination) or complete all recertification requirements can receive 60 AMA PRA Category 1™ Credits at no cost. ABEM has contracted with the AMA to provide the credits as a benefit to ABEM-certified physicians. To receive the credits, you need to agree to ABEM sharing your contact information with the AMA. You can receive the credits by doing the following:

- Sign in to the ABEM portal at [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org)
- On the left navigation, click “View Examination Score History”
- Click the link “AMA CME Credits Attestation” and a form will appear
- Click “I agree” and fill out the form

Your certificate and confirmation of credit should arrive via email about three months from your request.

Obtaining the no-cost AMA credit through ABEM is available for requirements completed in 2018 forward. To obtain credit for requirements completed in previous years, physicians must apply directly to the AMA and pay the required fee.
Coming Soon! Letter Requesting CLIA Certificate of Waiver

ABEM can provide a letter of support. ABEM-certified physicians may submit to hospital laboratory directors requesting a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver and appointment as a designated trainer for emergency department personnel for specific point-of-care testing (POCT) procedures. The rationale for the letter is to help reduce the burden that emergency physicians face by having to undergo annual competency testing for POCT procedures, such as bedside hemoccult testing, urine pregnancy testing, etc. Physicians participating in MOC have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide such training.

The letter will be available to ABEM-certified physicians in early 2019. To download the letter, physicians must be participating in the ABEM MOC Program. The letter and additional information on CLIA and POCT are available from their Personal Page on the ABEM portal by doing the following:

- Sign in to the ABEM portal at www.abem.org
- On the left navigation, click “Print Verification of ABEM Status”
- Under letter type, click “POCT”
- Click “Continue to Next Step”

The most recent letter is the result of continuing efforts by the Coalition to Oppose Medical Merit Badges (COMMB) and is signed by each representative of the Coalition. Also available is a general letter stating that ABEM certification supersedes the need to complete “merit badge” requirements. That letter explains that ABEM’s MOC Program is a rigorous form of continuous professional development that contains content critical to the practice of Emergency Medicine, including procedural sedation, cardiovascular care, airway management, trauma care, stroke management, and pediatric acute care. Certification, therefore, supersedes the need for certifications sometimes required for medical staff privileges or disease-specific care center designations.
Subspecialty Updates

Neurocritical Care Approved as New ABEM Subspecialty

Neurocritical Care (NCC) is the newest subspecialty available to ABEM-certified physicians. The medical subspecialty of Neurocritical Care is devoted to the comprehensive multisystem care of the critically ill patient with neurological diseases/conditions. The goal of NCC is to provide optimal care to a unique patient population that simultaneously requires expert management of acute nervous system illness and trauma while integrating all other aspects of critical care medicine.

The NCC subspecialty is co-sponsored by the American Board of Anesthesiology, ABEM, the American Board of Neurological Surgery, and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN). Physicians certified by one of these four boards and who meet the eligibility criteria for NCC will have the opportunity to become certified in NCC. ABPN will develop and administer the examination; physicians will submit applications to their primary certifying board. ABEM appoints two members of the NCC Examination Committee. The first examination is expected to take place in either 2020 or 2021. Eligibility criteria will be posted on the ABEM website by the end of 2018.

ABEM Subspecialists No Longer Required to Maintain EM Certification

Physicians certified by ABEM who also hold an ABEM-issued subspecialty certificate are no longer required to maintain their primary Emergency Medicine (EM) certification as long as they are participating in an ABEM-accepted MOC program. ABEM believes that physicians who continue to practice EM in addition to their subspecialty should continue to maintain their EM certification. Acceptable MOC programs include:

- The ABEM EM MOC Program
- An ABEM subspecialty-specific MOC program
- An MOC program of another American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Board that includes Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment (LLS) and Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP) components
- ABEM also worked with the American Board of Preventive Medicine to allow physicians certified in Addiction Medicine and in Clinical Informatics to let their EM certification lapse if they are no longer practicing EM.

Physicians with questions are encouraged to contact ABEM at 517-332-4800, ext. 387, or subspecialties@abem.org.
UHM to Offer Certification Exam Every Other Year

The American Board of Preventive Medicine has announced that beginning with the 2020 examination cycle, it will administer the initial certification examination in Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine every other year. Until then, the exam will be offered during each of the 2018, 2019, and 2020 examination cycles.

EMS Practice Pathway Closure

The practice pathway for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) will close **July 1, 2019**. To be eligible under this pathway, all training and practice must be completed by **June 30, 2019**. If you have any questions, please contact subspecialties@abem.org, or 517-332-4800, ext. 387.

Subspecialty Board Eligibility

Board eligibility for subspecialty certification starts when a physician completes his or her training or practice required to meet the ABEM subspecialty eligibility criteria and ends when the physician achieves subspecialty certification. If a physician does not become subspecialty certified, their board eligibility ends seven years after it started, or through four administrations of the subspecialty initial certification examination, whichever is longer.

To be considered subspecialty board eligible, a physician must be certified by an ABMS Member Board and be participating in MOC for their primary ABMS certification. Note that physicians should not rely solely on ABEM reminders and are subject to all requirements and policies. If you have questions, please email subspecialties@abem.org, or call 517-332-4800, ext. 387.
Projects and Activities

The Purpose of Initial Certification

During its review of the ABEM certification program, the Board of Directors approved the following statement:

*The purpose of initial certification is to objectively and independently confirm that physicians who complete an Emergency Medicine residency demonstrate core knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to practice Emergency Medicine at the highest standards.*

ABEM uses rigorous assessments to ensure that physicians graduating from residencies around the country demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to provide safe, high-quality emergency care. Given the importance of initial certification, it is appropriate to have a secure, high-stakes assessment. This is especially important as patients cannot select their emergency physician.

Advanced EM Ultrasonography Approved as Focused Practice Designation

The ABMS has approved the ABEM application for a Focused Practice Designation (FPD) in Advanced Emergency Medicine Ultrasonography (AEMUS). Only ABEM-certified physicians will be eligible for the designation.

The FPD will recognize expertise held by emergency physicians with sophisticated, comprehensive knowledge of advanced emergency ultrasonography. While residency-trained emergency physicians have acquired basic expertise applying ultrasound in the emergency department, those physicians who specialize in AEMUS will have acquired a greater breadth and depth of knowledge in advanced techniques, research, and quality improvement skills.

Fellowship training is required. However, there will also be a time-limited training-plus-practice pathway, and a practice-only pathway. Candidates will be required to pass a secure, written examination to earn this designation. An implementation timeline and eligibility criteria will be available on the ABEM website. The first examination will be offered no earlier than 2021. Questions can be directed to ABEM at 517-332-4800, ext. 343, or at fpd@abem.org.
Does the Public Care about Certification?

Many physicians have never been asked by a patient if they are board certified, leading many to believe that the public doesn’t care.

The ABMS reports the certification status of physicians to credentialers and members of the public. In 2017, the ABMS received 764,622 such inquiries, of which 154,815 were checks on emergency physicians. Of the emergency physician inquiries, 136,524 were made by credentialers and 18,291 (12 percent) were made by the public through the ABMS Certification Matters portal.

The public might not be asking you, but they are checking!

2018-2019 Executive Committee

At its July 2018 meeting, ABEM elected the following directors to the 2018-2019 Executive Committee:

Robert L. Muelleman, M.D., President;
Jill M. Baren, M.D., President-Elect;
Terry Kowalenko, M.D., Immediate-Past-President;
O. John Ma, M.D., Secretary-Treasurer
Michael S. Beeson M.D., Member-at-Large; and
Robert P. Wahl, M.D., Senior Member-at-Large.

Directors Carius and Marco Complete Their Terms on the Board

ABEM wishes to thank Michael L. Carius, M.D., and Catherine A. Marco, M.D., who recently completed their terms on the Board of Directors. Dr. Carius’s first term began in 2009, and he served as President of the Board in 2016-2017. Dr. Carius provided leadership in a variety of roles, including Chair of the MOC Committee and ABEM’s representative to the ABMS Board of Directors. Dr. Marco’s first term began in 2009. She served as Chair of the Research Committee and the Credentials Committee, and was Senior Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee in 2016-2017. In addition, she was appointed to serve on the ABMS Research & Education Foundation Board of Directors. Both will continue to serve the Board as senior directors, oral examiners, and participants in the Residency Visitation Program. Thank you again for your service, Dr. Carius and Dr. Marco!
30-Year Certificate Recipients

The spring issue of the ABEM Memo included a list of physicians who had been certified for 30 years as of December 31, 2017. The list did not include the names of the following five physicians:

Kevin Scott Yeskey, M.D.
Joseph Theodore Young, M.D.
Steven W. Zebert, D.O.
Thomas Gene Zimmerman, M.D.
Joseph A. Zurlo, M.D.

We sincerely apologize for the error. You can view the entire list of 2017 recipients in the News & Events section at www.abem.org.

Annual Report and Year-in-Review Video

The 2017-2018 Annual Report and brief Year-in-Review video are now available. The Annual Report provides graphical representations about ABEM-certified physicians, examination activities, and finances. In the three-minute video, then-President Terry Kowalenko, M.D., describes ABEM accomplishments during the past year. Both are available in the Resources section of the ABEM website, at www.abem.org/publications.

Emergency Medicine Board Eligibility

EM residency graduates are designated as board eligible for a five-year period that starts on the date the physician graduates from an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education– or Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada–accredited EM residency program or an ABEM-approved combined residency program. Physicians will not have any additional eligibility requirements under the Policy on Board Eligibility if they apply for certification, take and pass the first Qualifying Examination available to them, and take and pass the first Oral Certification Examination assigned to them. Details are available in the Become Certified section of the ABEM website (www.abem.org).

Note that physicians should not rely solely on ABEM reminders and are subject to all requirements and policies.

Questions should be sent to BoardElig@abem.org or call 517-332-4800, ext. 384.
During the opening General Session at each Oral Certification Examination (OCE), ABEM presents awards to oral examiners based on the number of examinations in which they have participated. In acknowledgment of their generous service to the Board’s examination process, ABEM recognized 25 examiners at the spring 2018 OCE. The Board of Directors sincerely appreciates the many contributions these individuals have made over their years of service to ABEM’s OCE program. The awards were presented by Terry Kowalenko, M.D., President, and Jill M. Baren, M.D., Chair of the Test Administration Committee, on behalf of the Board.

**CLOCK – 8 Exams**
Dr. Kowalenko (left) and Dr. Baren (second from right) present the award to Thomas B. Perera, M.D.; John P. Marshall, M.D.; Deborah B. Diercks, M.D.; Robert G. Chin, M.D.; Jeremy D. Sperling, M.D.; Jeffrey P. Druck, M.D.; and Tiffany E. Murano, M.D.

**HOURGLASS – 24 Exams**
Dr. Kowalenko (left) and Dr. Baren (fourth from left) present the award to Marc S. Holcomb, M.D.; Steven C. Dronen, M.D.; Matthew C. Gratton, M.D.; C. Blake Schug, M.D.; Richard M. McDowell, M.D.; Brian L. Holroyd, M.D.; and Kerryann R. Broderick, M.D.

**PLAQUE – 16 Exams**
Dr. Kowalenko (second from left) and Dr. Baren (left) present the award to Jeffrey A. Manco, M.D.; Lauren Pipas, M.D.; William P. Burdick, M.D.; Joseph A. Scott, M.D.; Debra J. Paulson, M.D.; Jeffrey J. Schaider, M.D.; Kim M. Feldhaus, M.D.; O. John Ma, M.D.; Michael R. Baumann, M.D.; and Donald M. Yealy, M.D.

**TELESCOPE – 40 Exams**
Dr. Kowalenko (left) and Dr. Baren (right) present the award to Mark T. Steele, M.D.
Examination Dates 2019-2020*

**EMERGENCY MEDICINE**
- Qualifying
  - November 11-16, 2019
- Oral Certification
  - SPRING
  - May 4-7, 2019
  - FALL
  - October 5-8, 2019
- Continuous Certification (ConCert™)
  - SPRING
  - March 8-14, 2019
  - FALL
  - September 16-21, 2019
- LLSA Tests
  - Continuous on the ABEM website

**ANESTHESIOLOGY-CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE**
- Certification
  - October 12, 2019

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**
- Certification and Maintenance of Certification
  - September 12, 2019

**HOSPICE and PALLIATIVE MEDICINE**
- Certification and Maintenance of Certification
  - TBD 2020

**INTERNAL MEDICINE – CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE**
- Certification
  - November 20, 2019

**MEDICAL TOXICOLOGY**
- Certification
  - October 22, 2020
- Cognitive Expertise Examination
  - October 16, 2020

**PAIN MEDICINE**
- Certification
  - September 14, 2019
- Recertification
  - TBD 2019

**PEDIATRIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE**
- Certification
  - April 9, 2019
- MOC Cognitive Expertise Examination
  - March 1 – September 30, 2019

**SPORTS MEDICINE**
- Certification and Recertification
  - SUMMER
  - July 15-20, 2019
  - FALL
  - November 11-16, 2019

**UNDERSEA and HYPERBARIC MEDICINE**
- Certification
  - TBD 2019
- Recertification
  - TBD 2019

* For the most current information, please visit [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org) or contact ABEM at 517-332-4800.
American Board of Emergency Medicine
3000 Coolidge Road
East Lansing, MI 48823-6319
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

KEEP YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION ACCURATE AT www.abem.org

ABEM needs your current email, mailing address, and other contact information to help you keep your certification current.

ABEM sends reminder letters by email only to candidates and ABEM-certified physicians for whom we have valid email addresses. Update your personal information by signing into the ABEM website and selecting Personal Information.

You may also update your contact information using the form below. Email the form to AddressUpdate@abem.org, fax it to 517-332-4853, or mail it to ABEM at 3000 Coolidge Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823-6319.

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Effective Date_________________________ Date of Birth_________________________

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