



Policy on Required ABEM Continuing Certification Activity for Sports Medicine

BACKGROUND

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) Sports Medicine (SPM) continuing certification process is required for ABEM SPM-certified physicians to maintain certification.

POLICY

ABEM SPM-certified physicians must renew certification by participating in and meeting the following requirements.

Professionalism and Professional Standing

ABEM SPM-certified physicians' medical licensure must continually comply with the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure and Professionalism.

Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment (LLSA)

ABEM SPM-certified physicians must pass eight LLSA tests during their ten-year certification period. Four of the required eight LLSA tests must be successfully completed by the end of their fifth full year of certification, and the second four tests in years six through ten of certification. Physicians who do not complete their first five-year requirements on time will not lose certification, but will be reported as "not participating in continuing certification." Physicians cannot count LLSA tests they complete during one five-year period toward their next five-year requirement.

After the LLSA is retired in 2026, ABEM SPM-certified physicians must complete 25 SPM-related CME credits per year to meet this requirement until the SPM alternative assessment is available.

Assessment of Knowledge, Judgement, and Skills (Recertification Examination)

ABEM SPM-certified physicians must take and pass the ABEM SPM Recertification Examination in the second five full years of certification. Physicians are not required to complete their LLS or any other requirement to renew certification prior to registering for the examination, other than maintaining medical licensure in compliance with ABEM policy. Passing the SPM Recertification Examination is a required component of continuing certification but does not by itself renew certification. Certification is renewed on January 1 after expiration of the current certificate if all ABEM continuing certification requirements have been met.

Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP)

ABEM SPM-certified physicians who are clinically active must complete and attest to completion of Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP) activities to maintain certification. ABEM is phasing in these requirements. See the section, "Phase-in of Policy" (below) for details about the IMP requirement phase-in schedule.

When IMP requirements are fully phased in, physicians will be required to complete one IMP activity by the end of their fifth full year of certification, and one IMP activity in years six through ten of certification. who do not

complete their first five-year requirements on time will not lose certification, but will be reported as “not participating in continuing certification.” IMP activities must follow ABEM IMP Activity Guidelines, described below.

Physicians may report IMP activities they complete within their practice. Alternatively, they may complete any ABEM-approved, third-party IMP module.

Physicians who inform ABEM that they are clinically inactive do not have IMP requirements. Clinically inactive physicians can change their clinical activity status by contacting the ABEM office. If they become clinically active again, physicians will have IMP requirements current at the time they become clinically active.

IMP Activity Guidelines

ABEM guidelines for completion of IMP patient care practice improvement activities require that the physician follow the following four steps:

- Review patient clinical care data from ten of the physician’s patients. The data must be related to a single presentation, disease, or clinical care process that is part of *The Model of the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine* (EM Model) or the practice of Sports Medicine. Group data is acceptable if the individual physician’s data is included. Measuring fewer than ten patients is acceptable if the activity is focused on a high-acuity, low-volume, clinical issue.
- Compare the data to evidence-based guidelines. If such guidelines are not available, physicians may use expert consensus or comparable peer data.
- Develop and implement a practice improvement plan, which may be an individual or group effort.
- Review patient clinical care data from ten additional patients with the same presentation, disease, or clinical process as the first patient data review. Group data can be used if the physician’s own patients are included, and measuring fewer than ten patients is acceptable if the activity is focused on a high-acuity, low-volume clinical issue. Use the new data to evaluate whether clinical performance has positively changed or if acceptable performance has been maintained.

Reporting IMP Activities to ABEM

Physicians report completion of IMP activities to ABEM by attesting that they have completed the activities following the ABEM IMP Activity Guidelines described above.

When physicians attest to completion of IMP activities, they are required to specify an independent verifier of their activities. The verifier must be someone with oversight or knowledge of the physician’s completion of the activity.

Five percent of reported IMP activities will be randomly selected for verification. ABEM will ask verifiers to affirm that all of ABEM’s guidelines for completion of the activity were met. Any activity that is not verifiable will not meet the requirement.

Renewal of Certification

ABEM SPM-certified physicians who have met all their ABEM requirements to renew certification will renew certification on January 1 immediately following expiration of their previous certification.

Nonrenewal of Certification

Physicians who do not meet all their ABEM requirements to renew certification by their certification expiration date are no longer certified. ABEM provides options for formerly certified physicians to regain certification, defined in the Policy on Regaining Certification. The options for regaining certification are based on the following:

- The number of required ABEM activities to renew certification a physician completed prior to certification expiration.
- Whether more than five years have elapsed since the physician’s certification expired.

EXCEPTION

ABEM SPM-certified physicians initially certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine do not have to complete LLSAs. They must complete 25 SPM-related continuing certification credits per year to meet this requirement until the SPM alternative assessment is available.

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