



**American Board  
of Medical Specialties**

*Higher standards. Better care.®*

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## **American Board of Medical Specialties Statement Regarding Continuing Certification During COVID-19**

### ***ABMS Reaffirms Support for Physicians to Focus Their Priorities on Patients, Families, and the Communities They Serve***

As the worldwide health care community continues to navigate and respond to the ever-changing COVID-19 landscape, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and its 24 Member Boards are committed to supporting diplomates and trainees as they work on the front line to combat this virus by providing expert care to patients. For our residents, fellows, interns and program directors, this has translated into [supportive strategies Boards can employ](#) regarding initial board certification requirements and leave policies.

We recognize that the current priority of the Member Boards' more than 900,000 diplomates and their fellow health care providers is caring for the patients, families, and communities they serve. They must focus the limited time they have for education on the most urgent issues facing us all: learning how to prevent and treat COVID-19 and to protect themselves and fellow health care workers from harm.

ABMS and its Member Boards are responding accordingly by allowing flexibility during this critical time for our nation's diplomates. Examples include enhanced activities and heightened education in partnership with specialty societies focused on COVID-19, to deferment of activities or requirements and/or the extension of cycle deadlines, depending on the timing of activities in the Boards' continuing certification programs in 2020.

**We understand that the pandemic will have a highly variable impact on physicians based on the unique needs of their specialty. Individual Boards will respond in ways that best meet the needs of physicians in their particular specialty.**

In this rapidly evolving and challenging clinical environment, staying current is more imperative than ever. For this reason, the Boards will provide essential resources and programming in a variety of formats, share new information specifically relevant to COVID-19, and assure that additional training required to treat COVID-19 is recognized by the Boards. ABMS and the Member Boards will adjust their programs as necessary so that diplomates have flexible, responsive ways to maintain their certification even as they respond to the extraordinary patient care demands placed upon them related to COVID-19.

Some Boards have already made programmatic adaptations. All are receptive to discussions with diplomates who are concerned about their certification status. Adaptations, as well as supportive, educational options, will be communicated and, given the varied situations faced by each discipline, are best accessed by [contacting the Board directly](#).

The extraordinary efforts, personal risk and tireless service our physicians and health care teams are displaying cannot be overstated; our entire country is relying on their collective expertise. We stand in support of these physicians and trainees and will continue to assist and inform them as they use this expertise to treat and protect the health and well-being of their patients, families and communities.