

The background features a large, faint, circular seal of the American Board of Family Medicine. The seal contains a palm tree, an eagle, and a caduceus, with the text "BOARD OF FAMILY MEDICINE" and "MCM" visible.

The American Board of Family Medicine **STRATEGIC PLAN** 2025-2029

*Serving the Public, Specialty,
and the Profession.*

2

5-Year Strategic Plan

Mission

To safeguard the public through rigorous standards for residency education, initial and continuing board certification, support for improvement of health and health care, and research about family physicians and their practices.

To accomplish this goal:

- We certify family physicians who have a commitment to professionalism, lifelong learning and self-assessment, cognitive expertise, and a dedication to improving the care they provide.
- We partner with Diplomates throughout their careers, across all communities and capacities they serve.
- We collaborate with organizations, specialties, and other partners who share our commitment to a higher standard than licensure, and to the improvement in health care and the health of the public.
- We set rigorous standards for ABFM Board Eligibility, support excellence and ongoing innovation in residency education, and promote continuous professional development.
- We advance professionalism in family medicine.
- We conduct research that advances the science of certification, monitors how family physicians' practices evolve over time, improves the clinical and policy environment that family physicians practice in, and advances the scientific basis of family medicine.
- We support the development of future leaders for the specialty, the profession, and health care.

Vision

Our goal is to enhance family physicians' care, patient experience, and cost-effectiveness for all, while supporting the wellbeing of family physicians and their teams.

Values

Strategic Action

In a complex and rapidly changing health care environment, we act strategically on behalf of the public and family physicians to shape the future of health care. Our decisions will be open, evidence-informed, and we will be publicly accountable for them.

Collaboration

We work with Diplomates and all who share our commitment to improve health and health care.

Continuous Improvement and Innovation

We are committed to ongoing improvement in all that we do. We prioritize innovation, and regularly review the effectiveness of our programs and policies to improve our performance.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public, patients, and Diplomates.

Learning as an Organization

We learn from Diplomates, other specialties and professions, and the public, and change what we do as the result of what we learn.

Health Equity

We strive to reduce racial, ethnic, and financial disparities in care by aligning our certification standards, partnerships, and research with the needs of society. We seek the input of diverse voices in all we do. We recognize the plight of those most vulnerable, the complex demands on the careers of Diplomates, and the voice of the public.



GOAL 1

Evolve Continuous Certification

Strategic Need >>>

Continuous certification is the foundation of ABFM's work. Over the last five years, ABFM has shown that longitudinal assessment is rigorous, educational, and engaging. We have developed an innovative new examination blueprint based on both current physician practice patterns and risk of patient harm. Our strategic needs now are to integrate these initiatives across a new 5-Year Cycle and to develop a next generation of assessments for family physicians who will use augmented intelligence (AI) in their practice and assessments.

ABFM will:

- Implement the 5-Year Certification Cycle, providing assessments "of and for" learning with enhanced integration across activities.
- Launch a new certification examination blueprint based on physician practice analysis, risk of patient harm, and emerging priorities in health and health care.
- Develop and evaluate new kinds of objective assessments of cognitive expertise based on the premise that family physicians will use augmented intelligence in clinical care and assessments.
- Increase the reach of ABFM Performance Improvement activities by broadening dimensions of improvement and disseminating best practices. Our emphasis will be on health disparities, decreasing administrative burden and physician burnout, reducing health care utilization, and the cost of care.
- Implement a new sports medicine blueprint and longitudinal assessment.
- Support the growth of the Health Care Administration, Leadership, and Management Certificate of Added Qualification (HALM CAQ), continue to improve existing CAQs, and explore opportunities for CAQs for mid-career physicians.



GOAL 2

Support Diplomates and Their Practices Across Their Careers

Strategic Need >>>

ABFM Board Certification depends on a close relationship with Diplomates and their practices. Over the last five years, ABFM has sought out increased feedback from Diplomates, reorganized its communications department, and implemented systematic outreach to the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) chapters, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOF), Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM), Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors (AFMRD), North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG), and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM). The strategic need now is to leverage the improvements in communication and outreach to support the careers of Diplomates and advance the mission of ABFM.

ABFM will:

- Strengthen connections with Diplomates through visits to AAFP chapters and digital engagements, while reaching out to Diplomates not currently involved with major specialty societies.
- Improve Diplomate support through operationalization of Augmented Intelligence.
- Develop a Diplomate Engagement Network to obtain targeted input from key groups of ABFM Diplomates, including osteopathic, early and later career physicians.
- Translate feedback from Diplomates into better services and support from ABFM.



GOAL 3

Serve the Public, Specialty, and the Profession

Strategic Need >>>

A rapidly changing health care system puts primary care at risk and requires ongoing adaptation by ABFM. Over the last five years, ABFM and its partners have helped redesign family medicine residency education, developed a more robust research infrastructure, engaged large health care systems, helped lead the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (The National Academies) consensus report on Implementing High-Quality Primary Care, and doubled the number of Pisacano Scholars and Puffer Fellows to help meet the specialty's need for leadership. The strategic need now is to identify and act on the most important priorities for the public, the specialty, and the profession over the next five years.

ABFM will:

- Maintain high standards of board certification for family physicians. We seek to reassure the public that family physicians are committed to ethical standards, lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and rigorous external assessment of knowledge.
- Partner with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), its chapters, and other family medicine organizations, to advance certification and the professional development of family physicians. We will use ABFM data resources to identify and report trends within the specialty to partnering organizations across the specialty.
- Engage large health systems to optimize the role of primary care for improvement in population health.
- Develop a quality agenda for the specialty, working closely with the AAFP and other family medicine organizations. Our priorities will include health care disparities, burnout of family physicians and their teams, and the utilization and cost of care.
- Create new leadership development programs for diverse community-based family physicians and major leadership roles in health systems and medical schools. These will complement the existing Pisacano, Puffer, and Visiting Scholar fellowships and leadership programs of other family medicine organizations.
- Explore the public's expectations for primary care and board certification while fostering a broad coalition in support of primary care.



GOAL 4

Leverage Change in Medical Education

Strategic Need >>>

Over the last five years, ABFM and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Family Medicine Review Committee, with input from the other family medicine organizations, have launched the most significant changes in family medicine residency education since 1969. In addition, ABFM has now begun to implement Competency Based Board Eligibility (CBBE). In continuing professional development, the spread of robust continuing medical education (CME) methods has been slow, but the dramatic popularity of the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA), Continuing Knowledge Self- Assessment (CKSA), the ABFM National Journal Club (NJC), and the COVID Performance Improvement activity suggests that a certification board can effectively help advance continuing professional development. Our strategic needs now are to complete the rollout of CBBE, drive ongoing residency redesign, and support the continued evolution of CME.

ABFM will:

- Complete implementation of Competency Based Board Eligibility (CBBE), while supporting the necessary development of new infrastructure. This will require the continued critical engagement of residency program directors, faculty, and residents. We commit to reviewing outcomes and adjusting as needed.
- Drive excellence and innovation in residency education through the National Resident Survey, the National Graduate Survey, the Strengthening Outcomes and Assessment in Residency (SOAR) program, and the Family Medicine Advancing Innovation in Residency Education (FM-AIRE) program.
- Support the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM), Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors (AFMRD), Association of Departments of Family Medicine (ADFM), and other family medicine organizations to advance faculty development for residency redesign.
- Contribute to transformational change in continuing professional development, working closely with the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and other CME partners.



GOAL 5

Invest in Data, Technology, and Research

to support Diplomates, chart the course of the specialty, and help the profession improve the health of the public.

Strategic Need >>>

Over the last five years, ABFM has substantially increased its investment in technology and research, allowing rapid program development in our certification program and leading to national recognition of ABFM Research and the Center for Professionalism & Value in Health Care. Our strategic need now is to reaffirm our commitment to technology development and refocus our research efforts after five years of dramatic growth.

ABFM will:

- Continue ongoing investment in technology and operationalize augmented intelligence throughout the work of ABFM.
- Prioritize research on board eligibility and board certification, the ecology of family medicine, and shaping the practice environment while developing a new portfolio of workforce research. Our hallmark will use data to drive change, built on substantial ABFM support, and be supported by stable external funding.
- Pivot the Measures That Matter initiative to emphasize the value of continuity and comprehensiveness in health care, and promote its dissemination.
- Communicate the value of ABFM research to Diplomates, residents, and medical students.
- Develop an operational and business strategy for the PRIME Registry to secure long-term funding and recruit additional Diplomates.
- Develop additional ABFM data resources, including the National Resident Survey and a full sample of Medicare claims, and refine existing instruments. We will also obtain access to Medicaid claims data and the American Medical Association Physician Professional data file.
- Support collection of data across the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) certification boards for common goals.



GOAL 6

Promote Professionalism and the Social Contract

Strategic Need >>>

Five years ago, ABFM renamed its “Credentials Committee” the Professionalism Committee and implemented a major revision of its professionalism guidelines. ABFM has now begun to identify major professionalism challenges facing the specialty even as the Center for Professionalism & Value in Health Care has worked to make it easier for family physicians to demonstrate professionalism. Externally, however, knowledge of the social contract is waning, new curricula in professionalism in medical school risks backlash against the term “professionalism” itself for some physicians. The profession has also seen the dramatic consolidation of hospitals, physician groups, and payers, combined with large scale equity investment in health care. The strategic need now for ABFM is to recommit to its work on professionalism across multiple dimensions.

ABFM will:

- Explore reframing of the language of professionalism and the social contract for younger and employed physicians.
- Develop one or more optional assessments of professionalism as a competency.
- Engage the specialty in addressing contemporary professionalism challenges such as sexual misconduct, inappropriate use of controlled substances, and/or the supervision of non-physician clinicians.
- Continue to empower family physicians to be professional through dissemination of Measures That Matter, promoting payment for social risk, and engagement with large health care systems.
- Support innovation in education about professionalism for residents and Diplomates.
- Help galvanize a profession-wide response that addresses threats from health systems, payer consolidation, and venture capital that may adversely impact professionalism, patients, and the public.



GOAL 7

Promote Health Equity

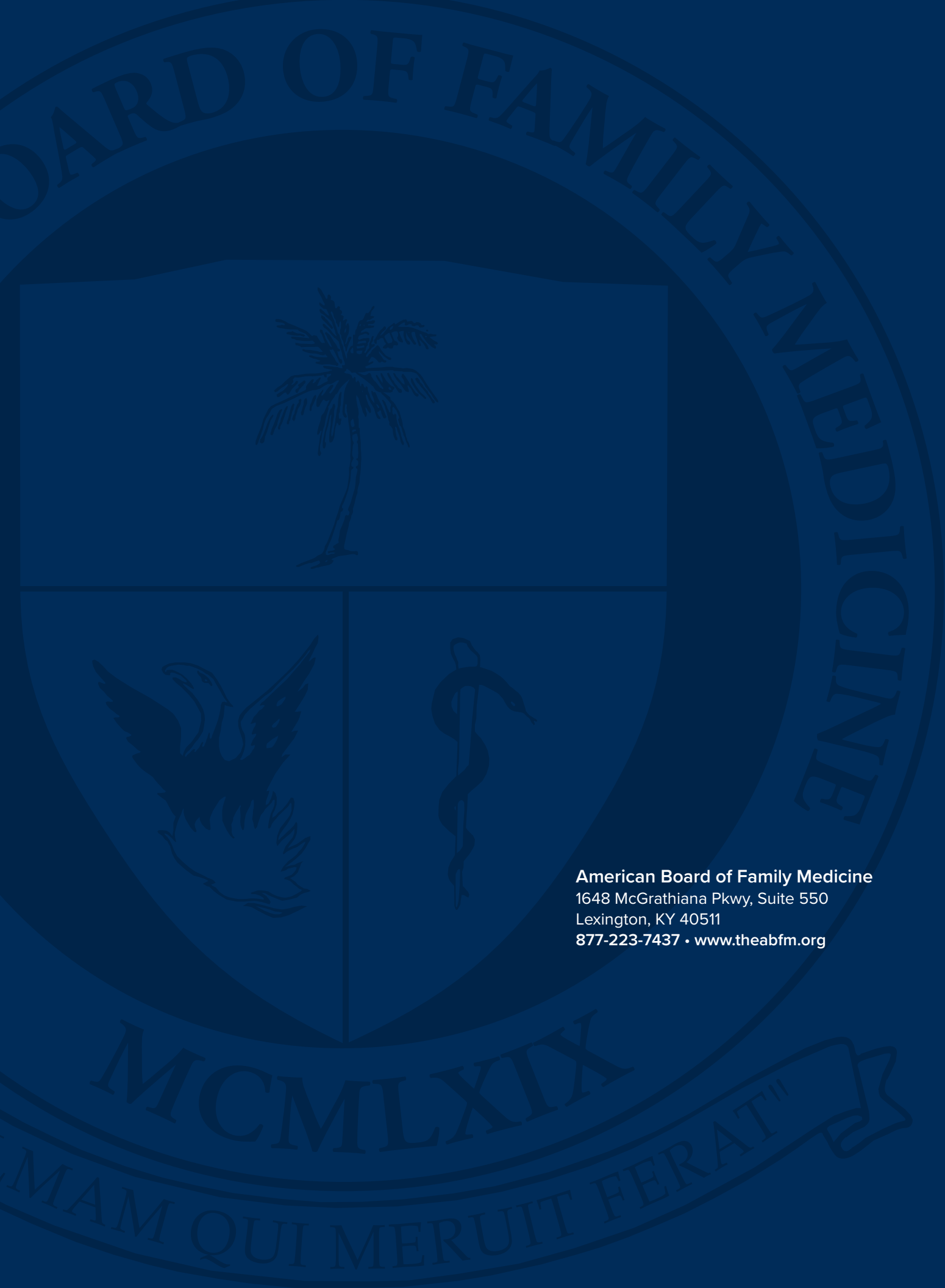
in the practices of Family Physicians
and the communities they serve.

Strategic Need >>>

The 2019–2024 Strategic Plan embedded health equity across several core initiatives, and in 2019, ABFM established a formal definition of diversity for tracking outcomes of its efforts to improve diversity of its Board, staff, and volunteers. After the murder of George Floyd, ABFM publicly committed to promoting health equity in its activities and to transparency to the public and to Diplomates. Now, as our society's visible commitments to health equity attenuate, the strategic need is for ABFM to reaffirm its commitment by making health equity one of its core strategic initiatives, even as it recognizes with humility that mitigating health disparities is a challenging and long-term effort, needing both numerous partners and persistence.

ABFM will:

- Support family physicians' efforts to reduce disparities in their practices and communities. To increase impact, we will develop ways of identifying and actively sharing best practices among Diplomates.
- Partner to develop and maintain knowledge assessments focusing on health disparities and social determinants of health.
- Continually review the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA) and the Family Medicine Certification Examination (FMCE) to assure fairness for all candidates.
- Conduct and disseminate research critical for health equity about the practices of family physicians, including disparities in workforce, practice resources, and compensation.
- Support additional resources to allow family physicians to engage community partners and provide more effective care for underserved populations they may serve.
- Continue to monitor and improve diversity among the ABFM Board of Directors, volunteers, and staff.
- Report regularly to the ABFM Board of Directors, Diplomates, and to the public about the progress of ABFM's work in health equity.



American Board of Family Medicine

1648 McGrathiana Pkwy, Suite 550

Lexington, KY 40511

877-223-7437 • www.theabfm.org