American Board of Family Medicine

CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET

FAMILY MEDICINE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

EXAMINATION DATES

APRIL 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 AND 19, 2017

NOVEMBER 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 AND 11, 2017
SCHEDULE FOR THE APRIL 2017 ADMINISTRATION OF THE FAMILY MEDICINE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Application Registration Period: December 2, 2016 – February 24, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Submission (Applies to All Candidates)</th>
<th>Late Filing Fee (Applies to All Candidates)</th>
<th>Application Fee (If Not Previously Paid within Payment Plan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By January 20, 2017</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By February 24, 2017</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For full payment and annual payment plan participants, the application fee is included as part of the payment option. None of the payment plan options include any late filing fees associated with the application, and any late filing fees incurred must be paid in addition to the examination fee. These fees pertain only to the application for the examination and do not include any activity costs. Note: “filing” the application means starting the application and advancing beyond the payment section.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 20, 2017
Last day to submit online application without incurring a late fee

February 10, 2017
Priority seating ends (Note: seat availability will be open to other clients of the testing vendor after this date; therefore, availability will be limited between February 10, 2017, and March 24, 2017)

February 24, 2017
Last day to:
- Submit application (with late fees assessed)
- Submit special testing (ADA) documentation
- Complete all Family Medicine Certification activity requirements

March 15, 2017
Last day to:
- Clear all application deficiencies
- Make official name change with ABFM for examination

June 30, 2017
All residency training should be completed on or about this date

30 Days Prior to Scheduled Examination
Last day to withdraw application without incurring a late cancellation fee ($35)

5 Days Prior to Scheduled Examination
Last day to withdraw application without incurring a seat fee ($150)

48 Hours Prior to Scheduled Examination
Last day to change testing date or location

EXAMINATION DATES

April 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18 and 19, 2017
(Note: candidates will select only one date for the full-day examination)

SCHEDULE FOR THE NOVEMBER 2017 ADMINISTRATION OF THE FAMILY MEDICINE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION
Application Registration Period: July 21, 2017 – September 15, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Submission</th>
<th>Late Filing Fee</th>
<th>Application Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(If Not Previously Paid within Payment Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By August 25, 2017</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By September 15, 2017</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For full payment and annual payment plan participants, the application fee is included as part of the payment option. None of the payment plan options include any late filing fees associated with the application, and any late filing fees incurred must be paid in addition to the examination fee. These fees pertain only to the application for the examination and do not include any activity costs. Note: “filing” the application means starting the application and advancing beyond the payment section.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**August 25, 2017**  
Last day to submit online application without incurring a late fee

**September 15, 2017**  
Priority seating ends (Note: seat availability will be open to other clients of the testing vendor after this date; therefore, availability will be limited between September 15, 2017, and October 2, 2017)

**September 15, 2017**  
Last day to:  
- Submit application (with late fees assessed)  
- Submit special testing (ADA) documentation  
- Complete all Family Medicine Certification activity requirements  
- Select a test center

**September 30, 2017**  
Last day to:  
- Clear all application deficiencies  
- Make official name change with ABFM for examination

**December 31, 2017**  
All residency training should be completed on or about this date

**30 Days Prior to Scheduled Examination**  
Last day to withdraw application without incurring a late cancellation fee ($35)

**5 Days Prior to Scheduled Examination**  
Last day to withdraw application without incurring a seat fee ($150)

**48 Hours Prior to Scheduled Examination**  
Last day to change testing date or location

**EXAMINATION DATES**

November 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, 2017  
(Note: candidates will select only one date for the full-day examination)
Examination Delivery Changes

In 2017, Prometric Inc., who has been our testing vendor since 2008, will be delivering examinations in a new platform, which will make the following examination improvements possible. Below are changes to the Family Medicine Certification Examination.

1. **Examination Structure:** The Family Medicine Certification Examination is now divided into four (4) equal sections of 100 minutes. Each section contains 80 multiple choice questions. A modular exam portion of the examination is contained in the second section of the examination and consists of 40 multiple choice questions over the topic selected. The second section of the examination will first present the 40 questions over the modular exam topic selected by the candidate and then 40 questions which cover the breadth of Family Medicine. The modular exam topic will be selected prior to beginning the second section of the examination. The first, third and fourth sections of the examination will consist of questions which cover the breadth of Family Medicine. (See page 25 for more details)

2. **Pooled Break Time:** The standard schedule for the Family Medicine Certification Examination now includes 100 minutes of pooled break time. The 100 pooled break minutes are provided to allow each examinee two 15 minute breaks and one 70-minute meal break during the three scheduled optional breaks in between each exam content section. However, candidates can use as much or as little break time as they feel necessary during any given scheduled optional break. Please note that if the entire amount of pooled break time (100 minutes) is exhausted before the end of the examination, any time spent on subsequent breaks will decrease available remaining examination time.

3. **Computer-Based Exam Experience:** The ABFM’s testing vendor, Prometric, has recently updated their test delivery platform. This change will affect the look and feel of the examination on screen. Candidates are encouraged to complete the examination tutorial which will be presented on exam day prior to beginning the examination to familiarize themselves with the new interface. An online tutorial may also be accessed prior to exam day here: https://www.theabfm.org/moc/examtutorials.aspx.

4. **Pregnancy Accommodation:** The ABFM now offers pregnant exam candidates the option of an accommodation of one flexible break of 10 minutes off the clock during active testing for each of the 4 content sections. This is offered as a comfort aid. (See page 17 for more details)
# Table of Contents

## Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 1

## Certification Requirements ........................................................................................................... 2
- Initial Certification .......................................................................................................................... 2
- Continuing Certification .................................................................................................................. 3
- Certification Entry/Re-Entry ........................................................................................................... 4
- Reciprocity ...................................................................................................................................... 4

## Completing the Application ........................................................................................................... 7
- Your Password .................................................................................................................................. 7
- Personal Information ......................................................................................................................... 7
- E-Mail ............................................................................................................................................... 7
- Fee Payment ..................................................................................................................................... 8
- Withdrawal/Refund Policy ............................................................................................................... 9
- Medical School Training (for candidates that have never certified) ............................................. 9
- Residency Training (for candidates that have never been certified) .......................................... 9
- Demographics (for candidates that have previously certified) ....................................................... 12
- Medical License ............................................................................................................................... 12
- Continuing Medical Education – CME .......................................................................................... 13
- Special Testing Accommodations .................................................................................................... 15
- Comfort Aids .................................................................................................................................. 15
- Modular Exam Choices .................................................................................................................... 18
- Agreement Page of Application ...................................................................................................... 20
- Approval of Application and Selection of Examination Date/Location ......................................... 20
- Testing Locations ............................................................................................................................ 20
- E-Ticket (Electronic Admission Ticket) .......................................................................................... 21
- Reschedule or Withdraw from the Exam ......................................................................................... 21

## Examination Information ............................................................................................................... 22
- Facts About the Examination .......................................................................................................... 22
- Study Materials ............................................................................................................................... 24
- Prometric Information ...................................................................................................................... 24
- Examination Day Schedule ............................................................................................................ 24
- Examination Administration Protocols and Procedures ............................................................... 26
- Examination Results ....................................................................................................................... 29
- Re-Examination ............................................................................................................................... 29
- Period of Certification ...................................................................................................................... 29
- Board Eligibility ............................................................................................................................... 30
- Revocation ....................................................................................................................................... 30

## Agreement ....................................................................................................................................... 32
INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides general information concerning the Family Medicine Certification Examination and instructions for completing the online application.

Please review the entire booklet, and be sure to read the agreement section carefully before beginning the application.

The ABFM Family Medicine examination is referred to as the Family Medicine Certification Examination, regardless of whether a candidate is attempting initial certification or continuing certification. An application is required for each specific examination you are attempting, April 2017 or November 2017.

All candidates are encouraged to start the online application and advance beyond the fee payment page prior to the initial application filing deadline in order to avoid incurring late filing fees.

The application process is used to review the requirements for candidate eligibility to take the Family Medicine Certification Examination as well as provide all the necessary information for taking the examination. Detailed information about all parts of the application will be provided within this booklet. Parts of the application that are incomplete or need to be reviewed by the ABFM for assistance/approval will be marked as a “deficiency” of the application process until completed.

Any outstanding requirements and/or deficiencies must be completed by the published deadlines. Further, all application requirements must be completed prior to selecting a test date/location. Ideally, candidates will select a test location by the priority-seating deadline.

Candidates will receive notification via email of application approval or of any deficiencies immediately after the application is submitted. Although reminders of deficiencies or any missing materials will be sent by email, it is the candidate’s responsibility to review their Physician Portfolio and submit all required items by the published deadlines. Additionally, if an application is not completed in its entirety, it is the candidate’s responsibility to return to the application and complete each page prior to the final deadline. Any application that remains deficient after the final deadline to clear deficiencies will automatically be withdrawn.

Further questions about the Family Medicine Certification Examination should be directed to the ABFM Support Center at (877) 223-7437 or help@theabfm.org.

It is the sole responsibility of an ABFM candidate to be aware of and comply with registration deadlines. In fairness to all candidates, the Board adheres firmly to the published deadlines for registration and late registration for all examinations. Candidates are encouraged to apply early in the registration period to avoid late fees or problems. Issues arising from a candidate’s inability to logon to the ABFM application system (e.g., forgotten ID/Password, computer technical difficulties, or operator error) must be resolved and all components of the application completed prior to 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time on the deadline date. The ABFM staff and Support Center make every effort to assist with these issues promptly; however, candidates are responsible for contacting the ABFM for assistance well in advance of the deadline.
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Initial Certification

Board certification is a meaningful indicator that a physician has the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to provide high-quality patient care. Although board certification is voluntary, ABFM certification is recognized throughout the world as signifying excellence in the practice of Family Medicine.

Certification will be awarded when all of the following criteria are met:

1. Successful performance on the ABFM Family Medicine Certification Examination;
2. The program director verifies that the resident has successfully met all of the ACGME program requirements; and
3. The candidate obtains an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States or any province of Canada and complies with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct.

A currently valid and full license to practice medicine is not required for residents to apply for and take the examination; however, in order to obtain and maintain certification, a resident must secure an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States or any province of Canada and be in continuous compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct.

Candidates are encouraged to meet these conditions and provide the information to the ABFM as soon as possible to avoid any delays in certification. Any candidate who sits for the examination successfully and completes residency training, but does not acquire a valid, full, and permanent medical license will have a 7-year board eligibility period in which the successful exam attempt will remain valid and certification may be granted once all requirements are met. The 7-year board eligibility period starts the day after residency training is completed/verified and ends exactly 7 years from the date of residency completion. Candidates who successfully take the examination, but do not successfully complete residency training will have a 10 calendar year window following the examination in which their exam attempt will remain valid and certification may be granted once all requirements are met. The 10-year window ends on December 31 of the 10th year following the successful examination.

Verification of satisfactory completion of residency training is submitted through the Resident Training Management (RTM) system by the family medicine residency program director. Program directors may access the RTM system up to 15 days before the anticipated completion date of the resident to verify satisfactory completion of resident training. Candidates attempting initial certification will not receive board certification until the program director has verified this information and training has been completed (pending all other certification requirements have been met).

Please note: the effective date of certification will be the date in which the physician has met all certification requirements.

All applicants for the Family Medicine Certification Examination are subject to the approval of the Board, and the final decision regarding any application rests solely with the ABFM.

Certification Resident Entry

Candidates who began their Family Medicine residency training June 1, 2012 and after will be required to complete the Certification Resident Entry process. Candidates who have received transfer/advanced placement credit for other types of previous accredited training, will be required to complete the Resident Entry process if their Family Medicine training begins on or after June 1, 2012. Candidates required to complete the Resident Entry Process must complete all Family Medicine Certification activity requirements.
by the final application deadline in order to file an examination application. Requirements for this process include:

1. Completion of fifty (50) points, including at least one (1) Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) and one (1) Performance Improvement activity (PI or approved alternative) and additional approved Self-Assessment or Performance Improvement activities to reach a minimum of 50 points; and
2. Submission of an application for the examination with full payment of the examination fee.

**Continuing Certification**

The Family Medicine Certification process provided by the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) is the means by which the ABFM continually assesses Diplomates. The ABFM's long-standing recertification program, the ABFM Family Medicine Certification process stresses the importance of ongoing participation in activities that evaluate each of these components between certification examinations.

Candidates who last certified or continuously certified in years 2003 through 2010 must complete all Family Medicine Certification activity requirements by the published deadline in order to file an application.

**7-Year Cycle** (last certified or continuously certified 2003 – 2010)

Candidates who did not meet Family Medicine Certification stage requirements and, therefore, remain on a 7-year cycle must complete the following in order to sit for the Family Medicine Certification examination:

1. At least three (3) Knowledge Self-Assessment activities (KSA)
2. At least one (1) Performance Improvement activity (PI or approved alternative)
3. Additional Self-Assessment or Performance Improvement activities to reach 110 points

**10-Year Cycle** (last certified or continuously certified 2003 – 2010)

Candidates who met Family Medicine Certification stage requirements, earning a 3-year extension to their certificate, and who are in the third stage of their 10-year cycle, must complete the following in order to sit for the Family Medicine Certification examination:

1. At least one (1) Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA)
2. At least one (1) Performance Improvement activity (PI or approved alternative)
3. Additional Self-Assessment or Performance Improvement activities to reach a minimum of 50 points

The above activities must be completed no later than the final application deadline in order to file an application. The activities can be accessed through our website (www.theabfm.org) by logging in to the Physician Portfolio and clicking the Certification Activities link. Please note: most Performance Improvement activities require a minimum of one week to complete. When participating in activities, candidates must allow enough time to complete the activity by the final application deadline, in order to file an application.

In addition to completing Family Medicine Certification activities, candidates wishing to take the Family Medicine Certification Examination must report 300 CME credits (earned in the prior six [6] years). These requirements must be complete by the deadline for clearing application deficiencies. If a candidate is not able to complete the requirements by the final application deadline, they should wait until the next examination period to apply.

**Continuous Family Medicine Certification Process** (last certified or continuously certified in 2011 or after)

Candidates who last certified or continuously certified in 2011 or after, must complete the following activities in 3-year windows called “stages” in order to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination:

1. At least one (1) Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA)
2. At least one (1) Performance Improvement activity (PI or approved alternative)
3. Additional Self-Assessment or Performance Improvement activities to reach a minimum of 50 points
4. Completion of one hundred fifty (150) credits of acceptable CME (minimum 50% Division I), acquired during the 3-year stage
5. Compliance with ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct which includes holding an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States or any province of Canada

If the above activities have been completed by the most recent stage deadline then the candidate will be allowed to sit for the examination. If a candidate has not met the requirements of their most recent stage deadline, they will be required to complete any delinquent activities before they would be approved to sit for the examination.

The activities can be accessed through our website (www.theabfm.org) by logging in to the Physician Portfolio and clicking the Certification Activities link. Please note: most Performance Improvement activities require a minimum of one week to complete. When participating in activities, candidates must allow enough time to complete the activity by the final application deadline, in order to file an application.

**Certification Entry/Re-Entry**

Candidates who do not successfully pass the Family Medicine Certification Examination within three (3) calendar years of the year in which residency training is completed are required to satisfy the Certification Entry Process in order to take the examination and gain initial certification status. Additionally, any candidate who a.) previously certified but never entered the Family Medicine Certification process or b.) have let their certification remain expired for more than three (3) years must complete the Certification Re-Entry Process in order to take the examination and regain certification status. Candidates required to complete the Certification Entry/Re-Entry Process must complete all Family Medicine Certification activity requirements by the final application deadline in order to file an application. Requirements for the Certification Entry/Re-Entry Process include:

1. Completion of fifty (50) points, including at least one (1) Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) and one (1) Performance Improvement activity (PI or approved alternative) and additional approved Self-Assessment or Performance Improvement activities to reach a minimum of 50 points;
2. Completion of one hundred fifty (150) credits of acceptable continuing medical education (CME);
3. A one-time process payment; and
4. Submission of an application for the examination with full payment of the examination fee.

The Certification Entry/Re-Entry process must be completed no later than 3 calendar years following the year the process is started. If the process is not completed in the established timeframe, a new cycle of Entry/Re-Entry will be required in order to gain/regain certification. Any activities completed prior to starting the Entry/Re-Entry cycle (and their fees) will not carry forward. Any incomplete activities started prior to the Entry/Re-Entry cycle will be reset so they may be started anew.

For additional information regarding Family Medicine Certification, please visit https://www.theabfm.org/MOC/index.aspx, or contact the ABFM Support Center at (877) 223-7437 or help@theabfm.org.

**Reciprocity**

The American Board of Family Medicine has developed reciprocity agreements with the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners, and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Diplomates of the ABFM may be eligible to seek certification by these colleges. Further, members in good standing of these colleges (and the Royal College of General Practitioners of Great Britain), who meet all other requirements of the ABFM and reside in the United States may be eligible to take the Family Medicine Certification Examination. Eligibility through reciprocity
is available to physicians who have satisfactorily completed formal training in family medicine accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting organization within the country in which they are certified. Effective August 2000, Diplomates of the ABFM are no longer eligible to seek certification by the Royal College of General Practitioners of Great Britain.

Candidates applying for certification under one of the reciprocity agreements, should indicate the college in which they are currently a member in good standing of and the date that they were certified by examination. The candidate must forward to the ABFM: (1) a letter from the college verifying that the candidate is certified by examination and that they are currently a member in good standing, and (2) a letter from a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine, the candidate’s hospital administrator, or the office of the candidate’s local medical society attesting personal knowledge of the fact that the candidate has established residence in the United States and that the candidate is actively involved in family medicine in the United States. Letters written on behalf of candidates applying under agreement between the American Board of Family Medicine and the College of Family Physicians of Canada must verify that the applicant has established residence in the United States for not less than the immediate past six (6) months at the time of application.

**Canadian Candidates**

There are two pathways by which Canadian candidates may qualify for examination:

**PATHWAY 1.** Candidates who have satisfactorily completed two years of training in a family medicine residency program accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada may apply to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination upon the successful completion of a third year of accredited family medicine residency. The third year of training must be satisfactorily completed in an ACGME-accredited family medicine program or, if taken in Canada, must be approved by the College of Family Physicians of Canada. The third year must have prior approval of the ABFM and bring the total residency experience into compliance with the ACGME Program Requirements for Residency Education in Family Medicine. The request must be accompanied by documentation of satisfactory performance of the first two years of training (including a description of the curriculum) signed by the program director.

**PATHWAY 2.** Candidates who have passed the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) Certification Examination in Family Medicine may apply to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination if they:

1. are members in good standing of the College of Family Physicians of Canada
2. have satisfactorily completed two (2) years of postgraduate residency training in family medicine accredited by the College of Family Physicians of Canada
3. have been a resident of the United States for at least six (6) months
4. hold an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States and comply with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct
5. are actively involved in family medicine in the United States for at least six (6) months

Candidates approved to take the examination under Pathway 2 must maintain their good standing in the CFPC through the date of the examination.

**Registrants of the Royal College of General Practitioners of Great Britain**

Candidates who are certified by the Royal College of General Practitioners by examination may apply to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination if they:

1. are members in good standing of the Royal College of General Practitioners
2. possess a certificate of Prescribed/Equivalent experience issued by the Joint Committee on Post-Graduate Training for General Practice
3. reside in the United States
4. hold an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States and comply with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct
5. are actively involved in family medicine in the United States

**Members of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners**
Candidates who are members of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners may apply to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination if they:
1. are members in good standing of the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners
2. have completed the General Practice Training Programme (GPTP)
3. reside in the United States
4. hold an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States and comply with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct
5. are actively involved in family medicine in the United States

**Fellows of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners**
Candidates who are fellows of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners may apply to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination if they:
1. are members in good standing of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
2. have completed the Royal Australian College of General Practice Training Program
3. reside in the United States
4. hold an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States and comply with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct
5. are actively involved in family medicine in the United States
The purpose of this section of the Candidate Information Booklet is to provide essential information about ensuring the ABFM has accurate information about the candidate, the application process, the requirements candidates must meet prior to and/or while completing the application process, and choosing a testing location and seat.

**Password**

The password provided to a candidate for accessing the Physician Portfolio is confidential. Candidates will be required to change the initial password they are assigned and are then strongly encouraged to use a password known only to them. There is a link in the Physician Portfolio that allows the candidate to change the password at any time. Anyone with access to a candidate’s ID and password has access to all secure information pertaining to that candidate on our website. Further, examination results are accessible only on our website by using the candidate’s ID and password.

**Personal Information**

Candidates should confirm or update all personal information in the Physician Portfolio on the Contact Information page. Fields that are not editable include name, ABFM ID number, gender, degree, birthdate, and last four digits of the social security number. If any of this information is incorrect, the candidate must contact the ABFM Records Department to have it corrected.

The ABFM requires candidates who have had a legal name change to submit a copy of the appropriate legal document (e.g., marriage, divorce, etc.) in order to change our record. However, it is important to note that the name on record with the ABFM should exactly match the name appearing on the ID presented for admittance to the examination. Any discrepancy in the name will potentially delay or prevent admittance to the examination. All name issues should be resolved by the deadline for clearing application deficiencies. Please contact the ABFM Records Department for assistance with any name issues.

Candidates also should verify, update, or enter their primary mailing address. This is the address the certificate will be mailed to. Address information can be updated through the Physician Portfolio at any time by clicking the Contact Information link.

**E-Mail**

The ABFM will correspond with examination candidates through email. Candidates should ensure that the ABFM has a current email address on file. Email information can be updated through the Physician Portfolio at any time by clicking the Contact Information link.

During the registration process, candidates are required to reply to an email confirmation, which verifies that the email address on file is accurate and the candidate is able to receive emails from the ABFM. (Many email services do not notify senders that an email is received or rejected; as such, we may be unaware our communications are not reaching intended recipients.) Once the email confirmation is complete, candidates must return to the application and complete all remaining application pages.

All candidates are required to have a confirmed email address during the application process.
Fee Payment

April Application Registration Period: December 2, 2016 – February 24, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Submission</th>
<th>Late Filing Fee</th>
<th>Application Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(If Not Previously Paid within Payment Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By January 20, 2017</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By February 24, 2017</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

November Application Registration Period: July 21, 2017 – September 15, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Submission</th>
<th>Late Filing Fee</th>
<th>Application Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(Applies to All Candidates)</td>
<td>(If Not Previously Paid within Payment Plan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By August 25, 2017</td>
<td>No Fee</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By September 15, 2017</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to expedite the process of applying for the exam, and to avoid late filing fees, candidates are encouraged to file applications by the first application deadline. The ABFM defines “filing” an application as the date the application is started and advanced beyond the payment page. This action either will apply any examination fees already paid within a payment plan or will permit a candidate to pay examination and/or late filing fees that are due.

Certification candidates, certification entry/re-entry candidates, or candidates participating in Family Medicine Certification under the Pay-as-You-Go Plan, will pay the full examination fee according to the payment schedule above.

Candidates participating in the Family Medicine Certification process who chose the Process Fee Plan, the Stage Prepayment Plan, or the Annual Payment Plan, and who have not made all required payments, must make any outstanding payment(s) and file the application (including the $250 application fee) prior to the first application deadline in order to avoid any late application filing fees.

Candidates participating in the Family Medicine Certification process who chose the Full-Payment Plan have paid the examination fee and will not incur any additional costs for the exam if the application is filed by the first application deadline. However, if the application is filed after the first application deadline, late filing fees will apply.

The online payment option of the ABFM uses Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology to encrypt the personal and financial information being sent over the Internet. The candidate’s browser will display a locked padlock icon to indicate that SSL encryption is being used. Consequently, candidates may be assured that the easy-to-use, online payment process is a highly secure payment option.

If a candidate prefers to submit a credit card number in writing or pay by check, a payment information page can be printed from within the online application to submit with payment. Once the ABFM has processed the payment, the candidate will be able to complete the application.

If a credit card is declined or a check is returned by the bank, the fee must be resubmitted for the original amount plus a non-sufficient funds (NSF) fee of $50.00, and must be paid by certified check or money order. Further, the testing appointment will be cancelled for any candidate whose credit card is declined or check is returned, and the candidate will not be able to reschedule until all fees have been paid.

Please note: No candidate will be allowed to take the examination until all fees are paid and all necessary requirements have been satisfactorily met. If a candidate is not successful on the examination, the application/registration process must be repeated, and will include payment of the full examination fee.
Withdrawal/Refund Policy

Any candidate who is unable to complete the application requirements or who needs to delay participation in the examination, is encouraged to withdraw their application. This is accomplished through the Physician Portfolio by clicking the Certification Examination link and then selecting the Withdraw option. By selecting the withdraw option you will be cancelling your current application and the fees for that examination will be applied to the next testing window. An examination fee can be carried forward for a maximum of three (3) years. If a fee is not used, by taking the examination, within the three-year period, a partial refund will be issued (that is less all applicable fees). Any fee(s) incurred for late withdraw or no-show will be applied to subsequent registrations and those fees must be paid prior to registering for the next examination.

Candidates who participate in the Family Medicine Certification process and who have made all required payments, subsequently have paid the examination fee within their payment plan and, therefore, are able to carry the payment forward to the next registration.

Candidates who have withdrawn an application and who prefer to receive a refund (rather than the fee being carried forward) must submit a written request to help@theabfm.org. Refunds will be issued within 2–3 weeks of receipt of the request. Please note: the application processing fee ($200) and any late fees paid are non-refundable. Additionally, any cancellation fee or seat fee incurred due to late withdrawal will be withheld from the refundable portion of the examination fee.

Medical School Training (for candidates applying for initial certification)

This information was entered by the residency program. If there is incorrect information in a candidate’s application, please contact the ABFM Support Center. If the candidate graduated from an international medical school, they must hold a standard certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) or have completed a Fifth Pathway Year.

Residency Training (for candidates applying for initial certification)

Advanced Placement Credit

For candidates who have completed training other than family medicine and who have received transfer credit for all, or part, of the G-1 year, the residency program is responsible for entering the information in the Resident Training Management (RTM) system, which then populates the application. If there is incorrect information in the application, please contact the ABFM Support Center.

The ABFM prefers all three years of training to be in the same ACGME-accredited family medicine program; however, other training may be considered equivalent. Programs seeking to admit a resident into training with credit toward certification for other types of previous accredited training, including training in another ACGME-accredited family medicine program, are no longer required to obtain prior approval for transfer/advanced placement of 12 months or less for residents transferring from:

- ACGME-accredited family medicine programs
- Other ACGME-accredited specialties
- American Osteopathic Association (AOA)–approved programs
- Canadian programs approved by the College of Family Physicians of Canada

The ABFM expects residency programs to submit notifications of transfer or advanced placement credit at the time the program authorizes the credit (via RTM or other appropriate means). Transfer/advanced placement requiring special attention (e.g., requests for credit beyond the beginning of the PG-2 year, transfers associated with the closing of a program, transfers involving hardship circumstances, or advanced placement of international training) must have prior approval from the ABFM. If a resident is admitted to training at an advanced level but the program director fails to notify the ABFM prior to the entry of the resident into the program, the ABFM will determine the amount of transfer credit at the time of its
discovery of the transfer. Consequently, the resident may receive less credit toward certification than anticipated and may be required to extend the duration of training.

Candidates who graduate from an American Osteopathic Association (AOA) approved school of medicine in the United States may qualify for certification if they meet the same requirements as specified for allopathic medical school graduates. They may apply to ACGME-accredited family medicine programs for entry into the first year (G-1). Osteopathic candidates who have documented satisfactory completion of an AOA-approved internship (G-1) year may receive credit for that portion of the G-1 year, which meets the ABFM guidelines for advanced level entry, or inter-program transfers. All candidates must satisfactorily complete at least 36 months of accredited graduate medical education. Only the G-1 year may be fulfilled by an AOA-approved internship year. Training beyond the G-1 year must be completed in continuity in an ACGME-accredited family medicine residency program.

All candidates' education and training experiences are subject to review and approval by the ABFM. Any variance from the above must have prior written approval of the ABFM.

The last two years of family medicine residency training must be completed in the same accredited program. Transfers after the beginning of the G-2 year are approved only in extraordinary circumstances.

**Family Medicine Training**

All candidates for the American Board of Family Medicine Certification Examination must have satisfactorily completed three (3) years of training (a full 36 calendar months with 12 months in each of the G-1, G-2, and G-3 years) in a family medicine residency program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) subsequent to receipt of the M.D. or D.O. degree from an accredited institution, and when applicable, a Fifth Pathway Year or receipt of a Standard Certificate from the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), or compliance with other ACGME requirements for entry into graduate medical training in the United States. If a physician does not meet the eligibility requirements of the ACGME for residency training in family medicine, his/her training will not be recognized by the ABFM. These requirements include:

- Residents enrolled in core three-year family medicine residency programs must satisfactorily complete thirty-six (36) months of training in order to become certified.
- Residents enrolled in combined training programs of four and five years duration must satisfactorily complete thirty-six (36) months of family medicine training in order to become certified.
- Residents who began training in a four-year Length of Training Pilot program prior to June 1, 2013, must satisfactorily complete thirty-six (36) months of training in order to become certified.
- Residents who began training as a G-1 resident in a four-year Length of Training Pilot program after June 1, 2013, must satisfactorily complete forty-eight (48) months of training in order to become certified.

Candidates who obtained an M.D. degree from a medical school in the United States or Canada must have attended a school accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education or the Committee for Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools. Candidates who obtained a D.O. degree must have graduated from a college of osteopathic medicine accredited by the American Osteopathic Association.

**APRIL RESIDENCY TRAINING COMPLETION.** Candidates for the April exam should complete all training requirements on or about June 30 of the examination year.

Residents expected to complete training between July 1 and October 31 of the examination year should be confident that they are able to complete all training requirements in a satisfactory manner, and obtain a permanent medical license prior to December 31 of the examination year.

Residents expected to complete training later than October 31 of the examination year should plan to take the examination in the next administration window.
Residents who are in good standing and expected to complete training by June 30 of the examination year are eligible to take the April examination, and are able to self-activate their application. Residents completing training between July 1 and October 31 of the examination year will require the program director to indicate the anticipated completion date, which thereby activates the application link.

**NOVEMBER RESIDENCY TRAINING COMPLETION.** Candidates for the November exam should complete all training requirements on or about December 31 of the examination year.

Residents expected to complete training between January 1 and April 30 of the year following the examination year should be confident that they are able to complete all training requirements in a satisfactory manner, and obtain a permanent medical license prior to June 30 of the year following examination year.

Residents expected to complete training later than April 30 of the year following the examination year should plan to take the examination in the next administration window.

Residents who are in good standing and expected to complete training by December 31 of an examination year are eligible to take the November examination, and are able to self-activate their application. Residents completing training between January 1 and April 30 of the year following the examination year will require the program director to indicate the anticipated completion date, which thereby activates the application link.

**Absence from the Residency**

**VACATION, ILLNESS, AND OTHER SHORT-TERM ABSENCES.** Residents are expected to perform their duties as resident physicians for a minimum period of eleven (11) months each calendar year. Therefore, absence from the program for vacation, illness, personal business, leave, etc., must not exceed a combined total of one (1) month per academic year.

Vacation periods may not accumulate from one year to another. Annual vacations must be taken in the year of the service for which the vacation is granted. No two vacation periods may be concurrent (e.g., last month of the G-2 year and first month of the G-3 year in sequence), and a resident does not have the option of reducing the total time required for residency (36 calendar months) by relinquishing vacation time.

The ABFM recognizes that vacation/leave policies vary from program to program and are the prerogative of the program director, so long as they do not exceed the ABFM’s time restriction.

Time away from the residency program for educational purposes, such as workshops or continuing medical education activities, are not counted in the general limitation on absences, but should not exceed 5 days annually.

**LONG-TERM ABSENCE.** Absence from residency education, in excess of one month within an academic year (G-1, G-2, or G-3 year), must be made up before the resident advances to the next training level, and the time must be added to the projected date of completion of the required 36 months of training. Absence from the residency, exclusive of the one-month vacation/sick time, may interrupt continuity of patient care for a maximum of three (3) months in each of the G-2 and G-3 years of training. Leave time may be interspersed throughout the year or taken as a three-month block.

Following a leave of absence of less than three months, the resident is expected to return to the program and maintain care of his or her panel of patients for a minimum of two months before any subsequent leave. Leave time must be made up before a resident advances to the next training level and the time must be added to the projected date of completion of the required 36 months of training. Residents will be permitted to take vacation time immediately prior to or subsequent to a leave of absence.

In cases where a resident is granted a leave of absence by the program or must be away because of illness or injury, the program director is expected to inform the ABFM promptly by email of the date of
departure and expected date of return. It should be understood that the resident may not return to the program at a level beyond that which was attained at the time of departure.

Leaves of absence in excess of three months are considered a violation of the continuity-of-care requirement. Programs and residents must be aware that the ABFM may require the resident to complete additional continuity-of-care time requirements beyond what is normally required to be eligible for certification.

Demographics (for candidates who have previously certified)

For more than 20 years the ABFM has collected data on practice organization and scope of practice from candidates during the examination registration process. The information you provide enables the ABFM to understand how family medicine is changing, such as scope of practice, geographical distribution, evolving business models, size of practice, and whether your EMR is serving your needs. For years these data have guided the ABFM Board of Directors as they make decisions about how to help family physicians around the country improve the quality of care they provide to their patients. The accuracy of the information you provide is critical to how well the ABFM can make Family Medicine Certification more meaningful and useful to you.

We recognize that questions about race and ethnicity are particularly sensitive for some of our diplomates. The ABFM collects this information to permit the detection of potentially biased questions so that the questions can be reviewed by an external panel including family physicians with regard to the nature of the differential functioning. This information helps the ABFM study and improve the certification process to better serve its candidates and the public. It is important to the ABFM to verify that the examination is measuring the construct of the family medicine knowledge and clinical decision-making regardless of candidate characteristics such as gender, race and ethnicity. The ABFM respects the privacy of our diplomates and has strict confidentiality policies.

Medical License

To obtain and maintain certification, all candidates and Diplomates must hold an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine in any state or territory of the United States or any province of Canada and be in continuous compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct.

Please note: Candidates may begin an application and sit for the examination while in the process of securing a permanent medical license; however, in order to gain certification, a permanent license must be obtained and the candidate must be compliant with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct (presuming all other certification requirements have been met).

Permanent license information must be submitted through the Physician Portfolio on the ABFM website. The effective date of certification will be the date on which the candidate meets all certification requirements.

Institutional, temporary, and training medical licenses are not acceptable and should not be entered in the Physician Portfolio. If a candidate uses an institutional, temporary, or training medical license, or enters an inaccurate date of initial licensure or renewal, in order to complete the requirements for certification and the ABFM determines that the information does not match the records from the licensing state or if the license does not meet the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, the certification will be invalidated. The candidate will be notified subsequent to this action. Falsification of any information entered in the application and/or the Physician Portfolio is a serious violation of ABFM policies and can result in withdrawal of certification for an extended period of time.

When updating or adding a new license record, applicants are required to attest that the license is current, valid, unrestricted, and permanent. If the medical license does not meet the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, the candidate must contact the ABFM License Coordinator.
Continuing Medical Education (CME)

All candidates who apply for the Family Medicine Certification Examination must show that they have met the continuing medical education requirements before being allowed to take the examination.

Candidates who apply for a Family Medicine Certification Examination three years or more after completion of their ACGME-accredited family medicine residency will be required to complete the Certification Entry Process, which requires 150 hours of acceptable CME in the last 3 years.

Successful completion of ABFM Family Medicine Certification activities will each provide the respective amount of CME credits as accredited/approved by the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) for Prescribed Credit. Credits obtained by completion of ABFM activities may be applied toward your required CME. Those activities include:

- Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) activities
- Clinical Self-Assessment (CSA) activities
- Performance Improvement (PI) activities or approved alternatives

Please refer to the ABFM website for information on approved alternative activities and any associated CME credit: https://www.theabfm.org/moc/partivact.aspx.

Candidates who last certified or continuously certified in years 2003 through 2010 are required to submit 300 hours of acceptable CME accumulated during the six (6) calendar years prior to applying for the examination. CME must be submitted/verified by the published deadline for clearing application deficiencies. All CME credits are subject to final approval by the ABFM. Candidates may verify CME either through their membership in the AAFP or by manual entry of CME activities in the online application.

Candidates last certified or continuously certified in year 2002 or earlier, are required to satisfy the Certification Re-Entry Process, which requires 150 hours of CME in the three (3) calendar years prior to applying for the examination.

Verification of CME through the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)

For candidates last certified or continuously certified in 2010 or before, the ABFM will automatically attempt to verify CME records with the AAFP as soon as a candidate begins the online application. Candidates last certified or continuously certified in 2011 or after track CME on a continuous basis during each 3 year stage inside the Physician Portfolio.

The AAFP provides the ABFM an electronic listing of their members who have been in good standing with the organization and who have met the ABFM requirements for CME. If the ABFM is successful in verifying a candidate’s CME, the CME page will not be included for completion in the application. However, if for any reason the ABFM is unable to obtain adequate CME information from the AAFP, the candidate will be required to complete the CME page in the online application.

Candidates who are members of the AAFP and who have adequate CME on file with the AAFP that has not been transmitted to the ABFM, should first ensure that their AAFP membership number is correct in their ABFM Physician Portfolio. This information can be verified through our website (www.theabfm.org) by logging in to the Physician Portfolio and under the My Profile tab selecting Affiliate ID Numbers. Otherwise, it may be necessary for the candidate to contact the AAFP to resolve this matter.
Manual Entry of CME Records in the Online Application

Any candidate for whom we do not receive adequate verification of CME from the AAFP will be required to document CME in the online application. When entering CME information, same activities that are completed on multiple dates can be summarized in one entry per calendar year. The entry should list the first start date, the last end date, and the total number of credits earned for that activity that year (e.g., create a single entry within a calendar year for when a candidate has several “1-hour credits” for the same activity, through the same organization, completed on multiple dates). It is not necessary to submit certificates of CME attendance. Candidates who have not fulfilled the total number of credits required at the time of application must submit additional credits no later than the deadline for clearing application deficiencies.

CME Requirements

DIVISION I. A minimum of 50% of the total required CME credits must be met by the following types of CME experiences:

- Scientific sessions provided by medical schools approved by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education
- CME conferences or workshops carrying AMA Category I CME™ or AAFP prescribed CME credit
- Multimedia or home study correspondence courses with examinations that qualify for AMA Category I CME™ or AAFP prescribed CME credit upon completion
- Scientific portions of hospital meetings, county medical society meetings, or grand rounds, accompanied with documentation from the sponsoring organization listing the specific title, date, location, and number of credits
- Full-time activity (as a resident)* in an accredited Family Medicine residency, a mini residency, or a fellowship in Family Medicine (up to 10 credits per week toward the CME requirement)
- Full-time activity (as a resident)* in an accredited residency or fellowship in a discipline other than Family Medicine (up to 15 CME credits per quarter, not to exceed 50 credits per year, to a maximum of 150 credits)
- Other CME activities carrying AMA Category I CME™ or AAFP prescribed CME credit (such as documented point of care learning, participation in quality improvement projects, etc.)
- An educational program of a university or college having a defined curriculum, designated faculty, and accreditation from a recognized institutional accrediting organization† or an agency‡ recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, that is designed to enhance a participant’s instructional, research, administrative, or clinical knowledge and skills necessary for the participant to succeed as an educator, administrator, or practitioner in Family Medicine (50 CME credits per year to a maximum of 90 credits on an hour-for-hour contact basis)
- Full- or part-time faculty development fellowships offered by ACGME-accredited residency programs leading to a post-graduate degree or certificate that prepares physicians for future faculty positions in academic medicine, or provides continuing professional development for current faculty (CME credits on an hour-for-hour contact basis to a maximum of 90 credits)
- Members of a self-assessment activity Knowledge Development Team for Family Medicine Certification may receive AMA Category I CME™ or AAFP prescribed CME credit as approved by the respective organizations

* Pertains only to residents in formal training.
† E.g., the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
‡ E.g., Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH)
DIVISION II. A maximum of 50% of the total required CME credits may be comprised of the following areas:

- Teaching medical students, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, paramedics, firefighters and police
- Individual medically-related educational activities not formally accredited, including:
  - use of audiotapes, videotapes, films, sound slides, etc.
  - participation in telephone, television, radio networks
  - programmed medical materials, such as teaching machines and computer programs
  - medical reading and journal club participation
- Review of manuscripts for publication in a peer-reviewed medical journal
- Publication of a review or research article in a peer reviewed medical journal (up to 10 credits per article)

Please note: all CME credits are subject to final approval of the ABFM.

**Special Testing Accommodations**

The ABFM provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2013 (ADAAA) for individuals with documented disabilities who demonstrate a need for accommodation. In accordance with these Acts, the ABFM does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in providing access to its examination program. Candidates must indicate through the examination application if special testing accommodations under the ADA are needed. Special testing accommodations will only be considered with appropriate documentation.

No candidate shall be offered an accommodation that compromises the ABFM examination’s ability to accurately test the skills and knowledge it purports to measure, and no auxiliary aid or service will be provided that will fundamentally alter the examination or will result in an undue burden to the ABFM. For further information regarding Special Testing Accommodations, please refer to the [ADA Policy and Procedures](#) available on our website.

All required documentation must be received by the final application deadline in order for staff to review and set the appropriate accommodations by the final deadline for clearing application deficiencies. After that date, requests with insufficient information, or that are incomplete for any reason, will not be processed and the candidate will be required to take the examination under normal testing conditions or withdraw their application.

Any request for special testing accommodations received after the scheduling of a testing appointment will require the cancellation of the current appointment in order to process and review the candidate’s documentation.

**Comfort Aids**

In order to provide a comfortable and secure exam environment for all examinees at the test center, many outside items are prohibited in the examination room. However, Prometric, our testing vendor, has provided a list of approved comfort aid items that do not require pre-approval. All of the items listed below are allowed within the examination room; however they will be inspected by Prometric staff during check-in.

All other items not included in the pre-approved list must be submitted and reviewed by the ABFM prior to the examination. Should a candidate require any personal item during the examination, whether due to a medical condition or otherwise, they will need to contact Stephen Huesing at shuesing@theabfm.org. All requests must be submitted prior to the final application deadline. If there is any question regarding the approval of a comfort aid, please contact Stephen Huesing to confirm so that you do not have issues on the day of the examination.
Light sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets are permitted in the testing room and may be worn or removed as needed; all clothing will be subject to Prometric inspection. Outerwear such as heavy coats, rain coats, ski jackets, etc. are prohibited from the testing room.

**Pre-Approved Comfort Aid Items for Examination Room**

The following items may be used during testing without submitting an approval request during the application process (all other personal items must be stored in lockers). All comfort aid items will be inspected during check-in.

**Medicine and Medical Devices**

- Arm/Shoulder Sling
- Bandages
- Braces – Neck, Back, Wrist, Leg or Ankle
- Casts/Cervical Collar
- Cough Drops (must be unwrapped and not in a bottle/container)
- Earplugs (Foam with no strings)
- EpiPen
- Eye Drops
- Eye Patches
- Eyeglasses (without the case)
- Glucose Monitor
- Glucose Tablets
- Handheld Magnifying Glass (non-electric, no case)
- Ice Packs/Heating Pads (non-electric)
- Inhaler
- Medical Alert Bracelet
- Nitroglycerin Tablets
- Pillow/Lumbar Support
- Pills (must be unwrapped and not in a bottle/container). Candidates may bring pills that are still in the packaging if the packing states that they MUST remain in packaging that cannot be exposed to air (packaging will be inspected by Test Center Administrator and a Center Problem Report will be submitted).
- Stool for Elevating Limb
- Surgical Facemask
- Walking Boot Casts

**Medical Devices (Attached to a Person’s Body)**

- Catheter
- Colostomy Bag
- Heart Rate Monitor
• Insulin Pump
• Oxygen Tank
• Spinal Cord Stimulator
• TENS Unit
• Urine Drainage Bag

Communication Aids
• Hearing Aid/Cochlear Implant
• Vocal Chord Magnifiers

Mobility Devices
• Cane
• Crutches
• Walker
• Wheelchair

Other
• Service Animal

**Items that Require Approval**
Pre-approval is required for the following items to be used during testing (all other personal items must be stored in lockers):
• Multiple Pairs of Eyeglasses (more than 1 pair)
• Gel Mouse Pad with Wrist Support (not provided by Prometric)
• Handkerchief
• Motorized Cart or Wheel Chair (motorized scooter requires separate room for storage purposes—foldable wheel chair only)
• Religious Headwear, Scarf, or Hat
• Special Request Mouse (e.g., left-handed, ergonomic, etc.)
• Thin-Sleeved Gloves

**Items Provided at Test Center**
The following items are provided by Prometric at the test center:
• Dry-Erase Board and Marker (no other writing surface or writing instrument allowed)
• Tissues (only 2 tissues allowed in examination room at a time)
• Ear Plugs
• Noise-Cancelling Headphones

**Prohibited Items in Examination Room**
The following items can be brought to the test center, but must be stored in a locker:
• Water and Any Other Beverages
• Candy (as substitute for smoking; to relieve test anxiety)
• Chewing Gum
• Lip Balm
• Source of Rapid Glucose (liquid form)

**Nursing Mother Accommodation**

The ABFM has a specific accommodation available to nursing mothers that provides an additional 20 minutes during the scheduled, optional break(s). This is offered as a comfort aid; however, appropriate documentation must be submitted, which consists of a signed letter from your OB/GYN, pediatrician, or family physician stating that you will be nursing at the time of the examination and will need additional break time to express milk. Please note: the ABFM and Prometric, the testing vendor, are not able to provide a private location for expressing milk or storage of expressed milk. Please submit your request through the Comfort Aid page of the online application and allow time for approval prior to scheduling your testing date/location.

**Pregnancy Accommodation**

The ABFM offers pregnant exam candidates the option of an accommodation of one flexible break of 10 minutes off the clock during active testing for each of the 4 content sections. This is offered as a comfort aid; however, appropriate documentation must be submitted and reviewed, which will consist of a signed letter from your OB/GYN, pediatrician, or family physician stating that you will be pregnant at the time of the examination. Please submit your request through the Comfort Aid page of the online application and allow time for approval prior to scheduling your testing date/location.

**Modular Exam Choices**

Candidates will be prompted to select one (1) modular exam topic of their choice during the examination.

The Family Medicine Certification Examination is divided into four (4) equal sections of 100 minutes. Each section contains 80 multiple choice questions. The modular exam portion of the examination is contained in the second section of the examination and consists of 40 multiple choice questions over the topic selected. The second section of the examination will first present the 40 questions over the modular exam topic selected and then 40 questions which cover the breadth of Family Medicine. The modular exam topic will be selected prior to beginning the second section of the examination. Once a modular exam topic has been selected and confirmed, the selection cannot be changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Section 1 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam Section 2 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 40 Multiple Choice Questions on Selected Modular Exam Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 40 Multiple Choice Questions on Breadth of Family Medicine Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Section 3 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Section 4 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provided below are descriptions of the modular exam choices to assist candidates in selecting and preparing for this component of the examination:

**Ambulatory Family Medicine**

This module covers office-based care of patients of all ages. Conditions covered may include both acute and chronic disease, common office emergencies (such as anaphylaxis, chest pain), minor trauma,
psychosocial and behavioral issues, and preventive care. Management of patients with multiple problems, family dynamics, clinician-patient communication, and working with other members of the health care team also may be included.

**Child and Adolescent Care**

This module covers acute and chronic diseases, developmental issues, and preventive care (including screening and immunization). Possible topics include infectious diseases, normal and abnormal growth and development, congenital problems, psychological and psychosocial issues, dehydration, obesity, and chronic diseases (such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis). Problems of infants (such as failure to thrive, hyperbilirubinemia, and feeding problems) also may be included. The age range is from newborn to age 21.

**Geriatrics**

This module covers problems and diseases in the population over age 65. Some of these may not be specific to this age group, but may require a change in approach in the older patient. Possible topics include infectious diseases commonly seen in the elderly (such as pneumonia), chronic problems (such as osteoporosis and Parkinson's disease), normal aging, nursing-home care, psychiatric issues (such as dementia and delirium), and preventive care (including screening and patient education about nutrition, exercise, and fall prevention). Functional assessment, pain management, and end-of-life issues also will be included.

**Women’s Health**

This module covers problems and conditions specific to women, excluding pregnancy. Possible topics include menstrual disorders, contraception, and STDs; reproductive and breast cancers; conditions most commonly seen in women, such as osteoporosis and eating disorders; and preventive care (including screening and patient education). Behavioral issues such as abuse also may be included.

**Maternity Care**

This module covers prenatal care, antepartum care, and postpartum care. It does not include the management of high-risk pregnancy, but may include the management of acute and chronic disease in pregnant women. Possible topics include screening, nutrition, management of labor and delivery, complications of pregnancy, and key concepts of advanced life support in obstetrics. Selected neonatal problems, such as ABO incompatibility and neonatal resuscitation, also may be covered.

**Emergent/Urgent Care**

This module covers conditions in patients of all ages that require prompt immediate attention, such as those seen in urgent or emergency care settings. Both major and minor conditions will be included. Assessment, triage, stabilization, and disposition of acute medical and surgical problems will be evaluated. Conditions may include musculoskeletal trauma, lacerations, cardiac and respiratory distress, assessment of acute exacerbations of chronic disease (such as asthma attacks or diabetic ketoacidosis), cardiac problems, and conditions with environmental etiologies (such as heat, cold, or toxins).

**Hospital Medicine**

This module covers inpatient care of conditions requiring hospitalization. Topics may include infectious diseases (such as sepsis), pre-operative and postsurgical care, myocardial infarction/acute coronary syndromes/unstable angina, stroke, fluid management, and management of patients with multiple comorbidities. Questions also may assess coordination of care with other members of the health care team and discharge management. Advanced ICU/CCU care (ventilator and Swan-Ganz catheter management) will not be covered.

**Sports Medicine**

This module covers issues related to participation in sports and exercise, by both competitive and recreational athletes of school age and older. It does not include care of elite athletes, such as Olympic
COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

20

athletes, professional athletes, or members of NCAA Division I sports teams. It includes the management of trauma due to acute injury or overuse; preparticipation evaluation of both recreational and competitive athletes, as well as individuals engaging in exercise for health reasons; nutrition; physiology and biomechanics; and benefits of exercise for prevention and management of disease.

Agreement Page of Application

The agreement page of the online application asks candidates to attest to having read the Candidate Information Booklet, including the full agreement located at the end of the booklet, and to agree to be bound by the conditions therein. Candidates also are confirming that all the information provided in the application is complete and true. The candidate’s full name and ABFM ID number will be presented to identify that they are the person signing the agreement. Candidates are asked to electronically sign the agreement by clicking “Yes, I Agree” and by providing their date of birth and last four digits of their social security number.

Approval of Application and Selection of Examination Date and Location

Once all components of the candidate’s application are completed and all deficiencies are cleared, the ABFM considers the candidate to be approved for the examination. The ABFM will automatically notify Prometric that the candidate is eligible to select a testing date, time, and location. From within the ABFM application, the candidate will be redirected to the Prometric website to schedule the examination appointment.

Candidates may view available appointments using the Prometric website (www.prometric.com/abfm) at any time during the application process. However, seats are assigned on a first come, first serve basis, and availability is continuously changing. To search for available seats, click on the link above and select Locate a Test Center. Then select the appropriate examination type and perform a test center location search. Finally, click the Availability link for the location(s) of interest. If the candidate has an approved application, they can schedule the examination appointment from this page by selecting an available date. Please note: not all test centers are available on all examination dates, and start times vary by location, date, and availability.

After scheduling the examination, the candidate will receive a confirmation email from the ABFM with the selected date/location. At that time, the candidate may return to the Physician Portfolio and print the E-ticket. (Note: In some cases, it may take up to 24 hours to receive the confirmation email. Candidates who have not received a confirmation after 24 hours are encouraged to contact the ABFM Support Center for assistance.)

We strongly urge candidates to select a testing date and location as early as possible, prior to the deadline for priority seating. Although we do allow test center selection after the priority seating deadline, the availability will be very limited. After the priority seating deadline, seats at test centers are not held exclusively for ABFM test candidates.

Testing Locations

United States, U.S. Territories, and Canada

Prometric provides testing in approximately 330 U.S. locations as well as 13 locations in Canada and several international locations. According to Prometric, 90 percent of the U.S. population is within 25 miles of a testing center. The full list of locations is always available on their website and is updated for each examination administration to add new locations or delete those no longer being utilized. For specific locations of available testing centers go to www.prometric.com/abfm and click on “Locate a Test Center.”

International Test Centers

The ABFM and Prometric offer testing at several international locations. Prometric has in place an established network of professional test centers providing the same high level of security, candidate verification, and secure examination administration as their U.S. testing locations. To search for available
international locations, go to www.prometric.com/abfm, click on “Locate a Test Center,” and select the country of interest to see if there is a location there.

Once an international testing location has been selected, candidates will be prompted to submit the international testing fee of $200. This is an additional cost beyond the normal application fee and is applicable only to the international sites. After confirmation of the appointment at an international location has been received, candidates will return to the online application to pay this fee. If after paying the international testing fee, the appointment is withdrawn or cancelled, but it is 5 days or more from the examination date, the $200 fee may be refunded; however, any withdraw or cancellation less than 5 days from the scheduled examination date will result in forfeiture of the $200 international testing fee.

Military personnel will not be required to pay the international testing fee if they are actively deployed outside the U.S. or Canada and select an international testing location. Requests for a fee waiver must be submitted in writing and include official deployment papers which indicate deployment at the time of the examination. Requests and documentation may be sent via email to help@theabfm.org or faxed to: (859) 335-7516.

**E-Ticket (Electronic Admission Ticket)**

The E-Ticket for the examination will be available to print as soon as the candidate receives the test center selection confirmation email from the ABFM. The receipt of this email may take up to 24 hours from the time of appointment selection. Upon receipt of this email, candidates may return to the Physician Portfolio and click “Certification Examination” and then select “E-Ticket.” This will display the E-Ticket with a prompt to “Print E-Ticket” in the upper right corner of the screen. The E-Ticket may be reprinted from the Physician Portfolio at any time prior to the examination.

Candidates are encouraged to review the E-Ticket thoroughly since it contains important information about the examination and the location of the testing center. The name on record with the ABFM must be the same as the ID that will be presented for admittance to the examination. Any name discrepancy will potentially delay or prevent admittance to the testing center. The last day to make a name change is the deadline to clear all application deficiencies.

**Reschedule or Withdraw**

**Reschedule**

Candidates who need to reschedule their current examination date and/or location may do so through the ABFM website, which will redirect to Prometric’s website. To reschedule, candidates will be required to enter their Examination Confirmation Number from the Test Center Selection Email or E-Ticket. An appointment may be rescheduled at no cost if done at least 30 days or more prior to the original scheduled examination date. Rescheduling within 29 to 5 days prior to the original scheduled examination date will result in a reschedule fee of $35. Any reschedule within 4 days to 48 hours prior to the original scheduled examination date will result in a reschedule fee of $60. The deadline to reschedule is 48 hours prior to the original scheduled examination date. All reschedule fees will be payable to Prometric at the time of reschedule.

**Withdraw**

Candidates who choose to withdraw from the current examination, must do so on the ABFM website. Candidates may cancel their appointment by returning to the Physician Portfolio, clicking “Certification Examination” and then selecting “Withdraw.” **Candidates should not contact Prometric directly to cancel an appointment.** In order to prevent a cancellation fee, an appointment must be withdrawn 30 days or more prior to the original scheduled examination date. Withdrawing within 29 to 5 days prior to the original scheduled examination date will incur a cancellation fee of $35. Any withdrawal less than 5 days prior to the original scheduled examination date will result in a seat fee of $150 and forfeiture of $200 paid for international testing fee (if applicable).

Please refer to our Refund policy for additional information regarding a refund.
Facts About the Examination

The ABFM Family Medicine Certification Examination is a test of family medicine knowledge and clinical problem-solving ability relevant to Family Medicine. Appropriate subject areas of the following disciplines are included: Community Medicine; Adult Medicine; Maternity Care; Gynecology; Care of Neonates, Infants, Children and Adolescents; Behavior & Mental Health; the Surgical Patient; and the Older Patient. Elements of the examination include, but are not limited to, diagnosis, management, and prevention of disease. The examination consists of four sections and is a full day in length.

The examination is offered in computer-based format. Key points concerning the computer-based examination are as follows:

1. Extensive familiarity with computers is not required, but the use of a computer keyboard and computer mouse should be within the experience of all candidates.

2. An online tutorial (examination orientation) is available on our website. Candidates are strongly encouraged to gain familiarity with the computer-based testing system by logging on to https://www.theabfm.org/moc/examtutorials.aspx. Candidates may also access the tutorial from the ABFM home page, www.theabfm.org, by clicking on “Initial Certification/Residency,” clicking “Exam Info” and then selecting “Exam Tutorial” from the list of links at the bottom of that page.

3. On examination day there will be a brief orientation/tutorial prior to starting the examination allowing candidates to re-familiarize themselves with the process.

4. The examination is proctored by staff from Prometric, the vendor used by the ABFM to administer the computer based examination. In view of the numerous examinations administered by Prometric, all of which are unique in their function and format, testing center staff are not expected to provide detailed assistance for ABFM candidates. It is not the responsibility of Prometric staff to provide assistance on things such as navigating through the examination or resolving any misjudgments made by the candidate. Candidates need to carefully read the on-screen messages in order to respond correctly. To do otherwise may result in loss of examination or break time, which cannot be altered by Prometric staff. Prior to examination day, candidates should become familiar with the operational procedures of the examination through the online tutorial and the examination day schedule.

5. Computer-based testing options include the ability to navigate forward and backward through the examination, mark items for further review, highlight/strikeout question content, review answered, unanswered and marked items. A listing of completed questions, incomplete questions, and marked items can be accessed along the left side the examination screen.

The examination screen contains a timer at the top center of the screen showing the time remaining for the current section. Candidates can click to view total remaining exam time a well. Items must be reviewed or changed prior to expiration of time for that section. Once a section is ended by the candidate or the section has timed out, candidates cannot return to questions in that section.

6. The standard schedule for the Family Medicine Certification Examination now includes 100 minutes of pooled break time. The 100 pooled break minutes are provided to allow each examinee two 15 minute breaks and one 70-minute meal break during the three scheduled optional breaks in between each exam content section. However, candidates can use as much or as little break time as they feel necessary during any given scheduled optional break. Please note that if the entire amount of pooled break time (100 minutes) is exhausted before the end of the examination, any time spent on subsequent breaks will decrease available remaining examination time. Candidates are expected to manage the pace and timing of the examination themselves. Allocated time for the entire standard examination appointment, including NDA, instructions and survey, is nine hours.
We ask that candidates carefully read all messages presented on the screen throughout the examination to prevent inadvertently clicking through a section or scheduled break.

Once the examination begins, if the candidate fails to complete and/or attempt any part of the examination, he/she must understand that any questions not answered, will be counted as incorrect. When there are unanswered items, or sections that are not attempted, additional time will not be allowed for completion, nor will there be any refund of the examination fee or credit toward future fees.

Failure to follow instructions on the computer or instructions provided by the test administrator can result in a candidate’s entire examination being voided.

Examination Admittance & Testing Vendor Information

Candidates should report to the assigned test center 30 minutes prior to the appointment time listed on the E-Ticket. This allows time for completing the registration process, which includes verifying ID, E-Ticket, signature, emptying of pockets and metal detector wanding.

Please understand that Prometric is responsible for and dedicated to ensuring that all candidates are given the same opportunity to test under the same testing conditions. Test security plays a major role in ensuring that no candidate has an advantage over another. Additionally, Prometric is contractually responsible to the ABFM for protection and security of our examination content. This is the reason for the security measures utilized by Prometric on behalf of all their clients in a continuous effort to provide the best testing conditions possible.

The E-Ticket and one form of government-issued identification must be brought to the test center in order to be admitted. The ID must be a government-issued, non-expired ID, containing both a photo and signature. The ID must be one of the following: driver's license, passport, or a state/county identification card. The name on the ID must be the same as the name on the E-Ticket presented. Employee IDs/work badges, school IDs, and credit cards are NOT acceptable as an ID. Candidates presenting with an ID that does not match the name of record with the ABFM or with an expired ID will not be admitted to the examination.

If the primary ID presented is government-issued and contains a photo but is lacking a signature (such as military ID) the candidate will be asked to provide a secondary ID that contains a signature. The secondary ID with signature must have the name pre-printed exactly as the name appears on the E-Ticket.

Personal items, such as cellular phones, a watch or time piece of any kind, or other electronic devices, pagers, any writing instrument or paper, purses, hats, bags, books, and notes are not allowed in the testing room and we strongly encourage candidates to leave them at home or in their car. If a cellular telephone or any electronic device is taken into the examination room (even by accident), the candidate risks invalidation of the entire examination.

Light sweaters, sweatshirts, and jackets are permitted in the testing room and may be worn or removed as needed; all clothing will be subject to Prometric inspection. Outerwear such as heavy coats, rain coats, ski jackets, etc. are prohibited from the testing room. All personal items must be stored in a locker. Candidates are NOT permitted to take any examination materials from the test center or to make written notes of the contents of the examination. Candidates found to be violating these rules will have their test performance voided.

During an active examination, candidates may not use telephones, leave the examination center (except for approved breaks), or communicate with one another in any way. Furthermore, candidates may not discuss the content of the questions with anyone during or following the examination. Candidates who do so will have their test performance voided.

An erasable note board and marker will be provided at the workstation during the examination for any work preparatory to answering a specific question. All note boards and markers must be turned in at the conclusion of the examination. No other writing instrument (pen or pencil) or papers are permitted in the examination room.
Prometric, the ABFM's computer-based testing vendor, administers examinations for a variety of clients. Consequently, ABFM Diplomates and candidates may be testing with others who are required to use the computer keyboard to type their answers. Any noise due to keyboard clicking can be minimized by use of earplugs or headphones available at the test center.

**Study Materials**

The ABFM does not provide bibliographies or review materials. However, candidates may find it helpful to read a section on our website titled “Exam Preparation.” This can be found through our homepage ([www.theabfm.org](http://www.theabfm.org)) by clicking “Initial Certification/Residency,” clicking “Exam Info” and then selecting “Exam Preparation.” This webpage contains videos and study tip documents. Also, on the “Exam Info” page, the “Examination Descriptions” link provides additional information regarding the ABFM exam blueprint.

**Prometric Information**

Prometric the testing vendor for the ABFM administers the examination. Candidates may locate a test center or obtain specific directions to a test site at [www.prometric.com/abfm](http://www.prometric.com/abfm). For further assistance, we ask that candidates do not call Prometric directly; instead, contact the ABFM Support Center at (877) 223-7437 or at help@theabfm.org.

**Examination Day Schedule**

Examination start times may vary due to the fact that candidates may schedule their examination appointment at various times. Candidates who arrive 30 minutes or more after their scheduled examination time will be considered tardy and will not be permitted to test.
### Sample for 8:30am start time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 8:00 - 8:30 AM</td>
<td>Registration, Checking ID, and Seating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 8:30 - 8:45 AM</td>
<td>Identity Verification, Review of ABFM rules, Exam Tutorial, Instructions for Exam Section 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 8:45 AM</td>
<td>Exam Section 1 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 10:25 AM</td>
<td>Scheduled Optional Break* (15 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 10:40 AM</td>
<td>Identity Verification, Introduction to Sections 2 &amp; Selection of Module Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 10:45 AM</td>
<td>Exam Section 2 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 40 Multiple Choice Questions on Selected Module Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 40 Multiple Choice Questions on Breadth of Family Medicine Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 12:25 PM</td>
<td>Scheduled Optional Break* – Lunch (70 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 1:35 PM</td>
<td>Identity Verification, Instructions for Exam Section 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 1:40 PM</td>
<td>Exam Section 3 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 3:20 PM</td>
<td>Scheduled Optional Break* (15 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 3:35 PM</td>
<td>Identity Verification, Instructions for Exam Section 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 3:40 PM</td>
<td>Exam Section 4 = 80 Multiple Choice Questions (100 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 5:20 PM</td>
<td>Brief Exam Survey (15 Minutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. 5:35 PM</td>
<td>End of exam day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* **SCHEDULED OPTIONAL BREAKS:** The standard schedule for the Family Medicine Certification Examination now includes 100 minutes of pooled break time. The 100 pooled break minutes are provided to allow each examinee two 15 minute breaks and one 70 minute meal break during the three scheduled optional breaks in between each exam content section. However, candidates can use as much or as little break time as they feel necessary during any given scheduled optional break. Please note that if the entire amount of pooled break time (100 minutes) is exhausted before the end of the examination, any time spent on subsequent breaks will decrease available remaining examination time. Candidates are expected to manage the pace and timing of the examination themselves. Allotted time for the entire standard examination appointment, including NDA, instructions and survey, is nine hours.

**NOTE:** All examination sections are timed and once that section is completed, voluntarily quit, or timed out, the questions in that section cannot be accessed again.
EXAMINATION INFORMATION

Examination Administration Protocols and Procedures

Violation of Procedures - Registration Process

E-TICKET. The E-Ticket contains important information regarding the scheduled examination appointment including a confirmation number, the date and time of the appointment, the testing center address and phone number, and other key details about the examination day. All candidates are encouraged to bring a copy of the E-Ticket to the testing center on their examination day as proof of their appointment and as a reference for what to expect.

GOVERNMENT-ISSUED FORM OF IDENTIFICATION. A candidate is required to present a non-expired government-issued, photo and signature bearing ID in order to be admitted to the examination. Anyone unable to present a valid ID with signature or whose name does not match the name on the eligibility file provided to Prometric, will be denied admission to the examination. If the primary ID presented is government-issued and contains a photo but is lacking a signature (such as military ID) the candidate will be asked to provide a secondary ID that does contain a signature. The secondary ID with signature must have the name pre-printed exactly as the name appears on the E-Ticket. Acceptable identification includes driver's license, passport, state/county identification card, or other government-issued ID.

TEST CENTER SECURITY. A candidate is required to go through a security check prior to entering the testing room at the start of the exam and upon each re-entry into the exam room. Each candidate will be scanned with a metal detector prior to every entry into the test room. Each candidate will be asked to raise their slacks/pants legs above their ankles and pull their sleeves up (if long sleeves are worn) prior to every entry into the test room. Each candidate will be asked to empty and turn their pockets inside out prior to every entry into the test room to confirm that they have no prohibited items. The security screening will be conducted in full view of the surveillance camera in the admitting area and if any prohibited items are found, candidates will be instructed to place them in the locker provided. Refusal to be scanned may delay the process but candidates will still be admitted into the examination.

Additional Prometric security measures during testing include continuous monitoring by video, physical walk-throughs by test administrator and an observation window. All testing sessions are video and audio recorded.

Violation of Procedures – Registration, Waiting Area, Locker Area, Testing Room and External Areas

Areas within the testing vendor's jurisdiction and control are generally recognized as the examination registration area, waiting area, locker area, and testing room. External areas are defined as locations within the building that houses the testing center, which are not under the vendor's direct purview, such as bathrooms, lobbies, foyers, and cafeterias, but are observable by interested parties such as other candidates or test center personnel.

“Active Testing” is any period during which a candidate’s examination time clock is running.

POSSESSION OR USE OF PROHIBITED INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION OR PERSONAL ITEMS. If a candidate, while actively testing or on an unscheduled break, is observed to have prohibited instructional information or personal items in their possession, the test administrator will immediately advise the candidate that a violation of the ABFM testing policy has occurred. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to reference materials, texts, articles, review materials, written notes, electronic media, devices designed to augment knowledge or recall, a watch or timepiece of any kind, cellular telephone, pager, personal digital assistant (PDA), mini-computer, camera, paper/writing surface or writing instrument (not provided by Prometric). If the prohibited information or personal item(s) have been accessed, the candidate will not be permitted to continue testing and a final determination of the matter will be withheld pending the results of the ABFM investigation. All materials found in the examination room or removed from a locker by the candidate will be inventoried by the test administrator and listed in a detailed written Candidate Problem Report following the examination.
COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS. If a candidate while actively testing, or on an unscheduled break, is observed communicating with other persons, including but not limited to other candidates, regarding medical information, examination content, or unknown topics, regardless of mode of communication, the test administrator will immediately determine the nature of the conversation and remind all parties involved that no communication of any kind is permitted during active testing. The candidate(s) will be warned that testing will continue without penalty, but a repeat violation will terminate the testing process. If a candidate is observed communicating with other persons in the examination room, the test administrator will advise the candidates that a violation of the ABFM testing policy has occurred. The candidates will not be permitted to continue testing and a final determination of the matter will be withheld pending the results of the ABFM investigation. In all cases, the test administrator will provide a detailed written Candidate Problem Report following the examination.

LOOKING AT THE ANSWERS OF ANOTHER CANDIDATE. If a candidate while actively testing is observed looking at the answers of another ABFM candidate, the candidate will be advised that a violation of ABFM testing policy has occurred. The candidate will not be permitted to continue testing and a final determination of the matter will be withheld pending the results of the ABFM investigation. The test administrator will provide a detailed written Candidate Problem Report following the examination.

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION PARAMETERS

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH SPECIFIC TEST ADMINISTRATOR INSTRUCTIONS. During the testing day, candidates must comply with the directions/instructions of the test administrator. Any candidate who does not follow the instructions of the test administrator may be subject to dismissal from the testing center and/or having his or her examination invalidated.

LATE ARRIVALS. Any candidate who arrives 30 minutes or more after his/her scheduled start time will be considered tardy, will be considered a “No Show” and will not be permitted to test.

NO SHOWS. Any candidate who fails to appear for their scheduled appointment will be considered a "No Show" for the examination. The fees for that examination will be applied to the next testing window unless a refund is requested. A $150 seat fee will be applied to subsequent registrations and must be paid prior to registering for the next examination.

A VENDOR-CAUSED DELAY. If a candidate arrives at the test center on time, but begins the examination later than the scheduled appointment time due to a technical issue or other vendor-caused delay, the candidate will be given the full amount of testing time. Any candidate in this situation will be seated as quickly as possible.

UNSCHEDULED BREAKS DURING TESTING. The ABFM recognizes that candidates may need to take an unscheduled break from testing while the examination clock continues to run. Extended absences, multiple breaks, or excessive cumulative time away from testing will be subject to scrutiny by the ABFM. Additionally, the policies of the building housing the testing center regarding smoking, possession of foods and beverages either in the lobby or on the grounds outside the building must be obeyed.

GUIDELINE FOR THE HANDLING OF CRITICAL IRREGULARITIES DURING EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

AN INTERRUPTION NOT CONTROLLED BY THE CANDIDATE. An examination interrupted by external causes or technological problems not controlled by the candidate will be continued if possible. All interruptions in testing greater than one hour will be reported to the ABFM by the test administrator or other designated employee. If the examination is predicted to resume within the next hour, candidates will be encouraged to remain at the testing center to complete the examination as rescheduling opportunities are often limited. Candidates who wish to leave will have their examination rescheduled at a mutually convenient time for the candidate, the ABFM, and Prometric. Any examination section that has not been completed will be replaced for any subsequent testing. (e.g. if a candidate has completed 60 of 80 questions, the entire test form will be replaced and the candidate will subsequently take a new 80 question form.)
Post Examination Issues

**Statistical Analysis of Performance.** Statistical evidence of suspicious results, such as, a grossly significant statistical improvement from one examination to another, a response pattern of incorrect answers significantly similar to another candidate, or such evidence would strongly suggest that the content of the test has been exposed prior to or during the examination. The ABFM has the option to nullify examination results without refund if these kind of results are detected using procedures generally accepted among the psychometric community for detecting such results. A cutoff of sixty days following an examination has been established by the ABFM for follow-up with the candidate, review of statistical data, examination of log files, and review of audio/video as needed.

**Review and Analysis of an Irregularity.** Following the observation of and the action taken for an irregularity the ABFM staff will review and analyze all information at its disposal to confirm the occurrence of a testing violation. Such information will include, but may not be limited to Candidate Problem Reports from test administrators, audio recording records, video recording records; notations and descriptions of prohibited instructional material or personal items in the possession of the candidate, and an explanation of the event/irregularity from the candidate. If the ABFM determines in its sole discretion that a violation of testing policy has occurred, the candidate will be notified by the ABFM. The candidate will be advised that the sanction for such a violation is ineligibility for a period of not less than six continuous years as of the date of the examination. The physician will be informed also that he or she may request reconsideration of the action by the Credentials Committee of the ABFM. As with all Credentials Committee cases, the physician may submit written material for review by the Committee.

Candidate Problem Reports

**Communication, Notification, and Documentation Procedures.** The test vendor is required to report any examination irregularity and all problem reports are provided to the ABFM following each examination.

Consequences of Violating the ABFM’s Examination Protocols and Procedures

Following the observation of and the action taken for an irregularity, ABFM staff will review and analyze all information at its disposal to confirm the occurrence of a testing violation. If the testing violation is confirmed, the candidate will be notified by the ABFM. The candidate will be advised that the sanction for such a violation is ineligibility for a period of not less than six continuous years as of June 30 of the year of the Family Medicine Certification or CAQ examination for which the applicant is applying. The physician will be informed also that he or she may request reconsideration of the action by the Credentials Committee of the ABFM.

Policy for Examination Retakes

Occasionally, problems occur during the administration of examinations that may impede the examination process. Weather problems, mechanical failures, hardware and software problems, and human errors have the potential of interfering with some part of the examination process. When such problems occur, the ABFM will review all information at its disposal. An opportunity for re-examination will be offered should the ABFM in its discretion determine that an incident or irregularity could have affected a candidate’s performance. A re-examination shall be the candidate’s sole remedy. The ABFM shall not be liable for inconvenience, expense or other damage caused by any problems in the administration or scoring of an examination, including the need for retesting or delays in score reporting. In no circumstance will the ABFM reduce its standards as a means of correcting a problem in examination administration.

- Candidates who experience incidents or irregularities during testing must inform the ABFM by letter, fax, or email within one (1) week following the examination. A detailed explanation of the circumstance or event that occurred during testing is required.
- If it is determined that an incident or irregularity had the potential of influencing examination performance, the candidate will have two options: (1) to be retested during the next examination administration; or, (2) to have the examination scored.
If the retest option is chosen, the response data from the recently completed examination will be invalidated and expunged from ABFM records and no performance feedback will be provided. A retest can only be taken during the next regularly scheduled examination administration.

- Successful performance on the retake examination will apply to the previous examination date.
- Unsuccessful performance on the retake examination will be recorded as an unsuccessful attempt. Any consequences of an unsuccessful examination, including loss of certification, will apply.

Candidates who choose the option of having their examination scored will receive a report of their performance and a letter indicating whether they were successful or unsuccessful.

Candidates who are unable or unwilling to be re-examined during the next regularly scheduled examination will forfeit the opportunity for a retest. Any subsequent examination will be scored and reported according to standard procedure.

Examination Results
It takes approximately 6-8 weeks for candidates to receive their examination results, which can be accessed in the Physician Portfolio when available. The minimum passing score for the Family Medicine Certification Examination is set by the ABFM Board of Directors Examination Committee and reviewed on a regular basis. A standard setting study is conducted every three years with ABFM diplomates who had recently passed the examination to continuously analyze the passing standard through the review of examination questions.

Re-Examination
Qualified candidates who fail the examination will be given the opportunity to take it again. An application is valid only for the examination for which a candidate has applied. Full fees are charged for each re-examination.

Period of Certification
In 2010 and prior, a new certificate was issued with the passing of each examination and was for a specific period of time. As of 2011, all candidates who are successful on the Family Medicine Certification Examination will be recognized as participating on a continuous basis in the Family Medicine Certification program and will be issued a certificate without an end date. Those who are successful on the examination will receive a certificate indicating that continued certification is contingent upon meeting the current and continuous three-year stage requirements for Family Medicine Certification.

The ABFM originally enhanced the process for Family Medicine Certification, previously referred to as the Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians (MC-FP) in 2003 and then updated the process in 2007 by offering the option to extend certification to 10 years. Now, upon successful completion of the examination in 2011 and thereafter, the newly revised requirements for Family Medicine Certification will be phased in. This new process will grant all Diplomates a ten-year examination requirement, a simplified financial plan, flexibility with the activity requirements, and a certificate without an end date. Any candidate successfully completing the examination in 2011 and thereafter will start the continuous Family Medicine Certification process which requires successful completion of Family Medicine Certification requirements in order to maintain certification. Family Medicine Certification rules will now require participation thresholds be met in three year stages. Certification status will be contingent upon meeting these Family Medicine Certification requirements within the three-year deadline.

Should a Diplomate not complete the requirements for Family Medicine Certification during the established time frames (3-Year Stage), their certification will expire and they will lose their Diplomate status. There will be re-entry provisions to allow for those Diplomates who lose their certification status to regain their certification status and/or reapply for Family Medicine Certification. Upon successful completion of the re-entry requirements, they can apply to take the examination to attempt to regain their certificate. Diplomates
who meet the ongoing requirements for Family Medicine Certification will continue to be recognized on the ABFM website as board certified. Please review the requirements of the Family Medicine Certification program at www.theabfm.org.

Candidates may opt to sit for their continuing certification examination before the year in which it is required. However, in the event of a successful attempt the 10-year examination requirement resets and any remaining years from the previous certification are forgone.

Family Medicine Certification requirements are expected to alter over time and continued certification will be dependent upon adherence to the then current policies and procedures. It will be the Diplomate’s obligation to become and remain familiar with the Family Medicine Certification program rules.

**Board Eligibility**

As of May 1, 2014, the Board Eligibility policy, approved by the ABFM Board of Directors in accordance with the ABMS Board Eligibility policy, will only apply to physicians attempting to certify for the first time. It does not apply to physicians who have previously been certified by the ABFM. For physicians whose certification expired prior to May 1, 2014, the ABFM will provide verification of physicians who are able to sit for the next examination. The previous policy relative to board eligibility may continue to be applied, but for no longer than 7 years. To review the policy in effect January 1, 2012 through April 30, 2014, please click here.

The American Board of Family Medicine defines the 7-year period of board eligibility as (1) the period that begins January 1, 2012, for any physician eligible to apply for initial certification prior to that date, or (2) the period that begins upon the date of successful completion of an ACGME-accredited Family Medicine residency training program, on or after January 1, 2012.

A physician who wishes to be designated as board eligible must continuously comply with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure and Personal Conduct. In addition, the physician must continue to meet the requirements for Certification Resident Entry or the Certification Entry processes.

After expiration of the 7-year period of board eligibility, a family physician can no longer use the designation "board eligible" without meeting additional requirements. In order to keep or regain the "board-eligible" designation for an additional 7-year period, the physician must successfully complete at least 1 year of additional training in an accredited family medicine residency training program (or an ABFM-approved alternative). During this 7-year period, the previous requirements remain in place with regard to continuous compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure and Personal Conduct, and the physician must continue to meet the requirements for Certification Entry.

**Revocation**

Each certificate issued by the Board of Directors of the American Board of Family Medicine shall be subject to revocation in any of the following circumstances:

**General**

The issuance of such certificate or its receipt by the person so certified shall have been contrary to, or in violation of, any provision of the Articles of Incorporation of the American Board of Family Medicine, Inc., or of the Bylaws of the American Board of Family Medicine.

The person so certified shall not have been eligible to receive such certificate, irrespective of whether or not the facts constituting such ineligibility were known to, or could have been ascertained by, the Directors of the Corporation or its representatives.

The person so certified shall have made a misstatement of fact in the application for such certificate or in any other statement or representation to the Corporation or its representatives.

The person so certified shall at any time have neglected to maintain the degree of competency in the field of family medicine established by the Board.
The person so certified has fraudulently altered, copied, or changed a certificate of the American Board of Family Medicine, or has fraudulently presented, or allowed to be presented on behalf of the individual, an altered, copied, or changed certificate of the Board. In such cases, the Board reserves the right to revoke, suspend, and/or prohibit participation in Family Medicine Certification and subsequent certification of the offending party for a period not to exceed six (6) years from the date of discovery of the offense. In the event the individual appeals or otherwise challenges the suspension, the six (6) year period shall be tolled until the action of the Board is determined to be final and enforceable.

**Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct**

A Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine shall be required to be in continuous compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct. Failure to comply with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct will result in loss of Diplomate status, loss of the ability to make application for Family Medicine Certification Examination or other examinations offered by the Board, and loss of the Board Eligible status.

In the event a Diplomate is no longer in compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, the physician must inform the ABFM in writing and immediately cease identifying themselves in any way directly or indirectly as a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine. Candidates for the Family Medicine Certification Examination and Diplomates of the ABFM should be aware that the ABFM receives periodic reports from the American Medical Association and the Federation of State Medical Boards regarding disciplinary actions by states against medical licenses. Should a physician be uncertain about whether or not they are in compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, a written inquiry should be made to the ABFM immediately.

**Authority**

The Board of Directors of the American Board of Family Medicine shall have sole power and authority to determine whether or not the evidence or information before it is sufficient to constitute grounds for revocation of any certificate issued by this Corporation. The Board of Directors may, however, at its discretion, require any person so certified to appear before the Board of Directors, upon not less than thirty (30) days written notice by registered mail, and to show cause, at the time and place specified in such notice, why the certificate should not be revoked. The failure of any person so notified to appear as required in such notice shall, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, constitute cause for revocation of the certificate. The decision of the Board of Directors in all such matters shall be final.
AGREEMENT

Please read the following conditions regarding the administration of the examination. You will need to verify on the application that you have read and understand this agreement. Your application will not be processed without this acknowledgement.

I certify that all the information in this application is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. In order to be granted certification, I understand I must abide by the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure and Personal Conduct which includes obtaining and maintaining an active, valid, full, and unrestricted license to practice medicine. Furthermore, I understand that the examination for which I am applying is voluntary on my part and I voluntarily accept and agree without reservation to the conditions set forth in the Application and this Candidate Information Booklet. I understand that in making this application I am voluntarily requesting that the Board review and assess my professional standing and that the decision of the Board in making such review and assessment shall be final.

I further understand and agree that the American Board of Family Medicine may withhold or rescind approval of this application, and in the event I am certified as a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), such certification may be revoked and my name deleted from the roll of ABFM Diplomates by order of the Board should it determine, in its absolute discretion, that:

1. Any of the information in this Application is false or contains material misrepresentations or omissions;
2. I am not in compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct;
3. I fail to satisfy the criteria for certification.

I understand that in the event I am successful on the Family Medicine Certification Examination and am in compliance with ABFM Guidelines that my Diplomate status will remain in effect as long as I meet all of the current and future Family Medicine Certification requirements by the established deadlines and am in continual compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct. Furthermore, should I withdraw from the exam for any reason after paying the required fee, the policy set forth in the Candidate Information Booklet for the current Family Medicine Certification Examination shall apply.

If my Application to sit for the Family Medicine Certification Examination is approved, I understand and agree to the following conditions:

1. All the examination questions and all other examination materials are the sole property of the American Board of Family Medicine subject to copyright and intellectual property protections afforded by law. Questions or other materials will not be available for review by examinees before taking the examination and they will NOT be available for review by the examinees after taking the examination. No one is permitted to take any of the examination materials from the examination room. No one is permitted to reproduce the test questions in whole or in part, make written notes of the test content, or electronically copy, record and/or transfer test questions or preparatory material. Any notes taken during the exam and removed from the workstation will be considered exam content. The white board provided by Prometric is intended for exam testing notes only and must be erased & returned to the test administrator when not actively testing. No reference materials (texts, articles, or review materials) shall be permitted in the examination area. During and following the examination, examinees may not discuss the content of exam questions with anyone.

2. I understand that I am expected to complete all sections of the exam and attempt all questions. Should I neglect to complete any section of the examination, I understand that any questions not answered will be counted as incorrect, I will not receive additional time, nor will I receive a refund of the exam fee or credit toward future fees due to my failure to answer any questions.
3. I understand that during an examination, (when actively testing and the exam clock is running) I am prohibited from bringing into the testing room anything unauthorized by the Prometric testing staff. During active testing, I am prohibited from bringing instructional information or personal items including, but not limited to: reference materials, texts, articles, review materials, written notes, electronic media, devices designed to augment knowledge or recall, a watch or time piece of any kind, cellular telephone, pager, hand held computer, personal digital assistant (PDA), mini-computer, camera or any writing instrument except the writing instrument provided by Prometric testing staff. Furthermore, I will not be permitted to communicate with other examinees or any individual, except members of the test administration staff. During an active exam, I will not be permitted to leave the testing center except for approved breaks. Further, I will make no effort to observe the answers of other examinees or have anything at my workstation except materials provided by the administrators at the test center. Only the distributed note taking materials provided by the testing center (i.e. note/white board, paper, writing instruments, etc.) may be used in the exam room.

4. The use of telephones or leaving the testing area during active testing is prohibited.

5. I understand that I risk being unsuccessful on the entire examination if I do not follow instructions on the examination itself.

6. The American Board of Family Medicine reserves the right to refuse admission to any examinee after any session of the examination has actually begun.

7. The test administrators at my assigned test center are authorized by me to take all action they deem necessary and proper to administer the test securely, fairly and efficiently.

8. Smoking will not be permitted in the examination room.

9. In addition, should I do anything prohibited by the ABFM, or should I be in violation of ABFM policy set forth within this agreement and Candidate Information Booklet, my test scores will be invalidated.

10. I understand that after the exam, I may not discuss the exam with anyone.

11. I understand that I will be video and audio recorded throughout my time at the test center. If the ABFM receives reports from the test center staff or video/audio surveillance taped during my examination which provides evidence of any violation of policies or accessing prohibited materials described herein or removing notes from the workstation area, I agree to cooperate with the ABFM and acknowledge that the ABFM has the right to invalidate my exam, forfeit the full exam fee and pursue necessary legal action.

I understand that if I am permitted to take the examination without being in compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, which includes the requirement that I hold a full, active, unrestricted medical license, and/or verification of satisfactory completion of training, I must satisfy both within the permitted time frame, to obtain certification. My effective date of certification will be the date in which I have met all certification requirements.

I agree that if I wish to have my examination rescored, I must make the request, in writing, within 14 days of the release of the test results. This request must include both a completed ABFM Rescore Request Form and a check made payable to the ABFM for $200. I understand that this review will be limited to verifying (1) that the responses scored were indeed made by me and (2) that the scoring process correctly transformed my responses into a scaled score. I further understand that this review will not be a review of the content of the items, or a reconsideration of what the correct answer should be. In addition, I understand that the review will not be a reconsideration of the passing standard or of the acceptability of the testing conditions.

I agree that the ABFM may, at its discretion, release information contained in this Application, my examination results and/or my examination scores to researchers selected by the ABFM to study the testing and evaluation programs of the ABFM under appropriate conditions of confidentiality established by the Board. Aside from research purposes, I understand that my individual and identifiable examination
results and scores will be considered by the ABFM to be confidential, and, unless authorized by me, will not be released to others except pursuant to legal process.

I agree to hold the American Board of Family Medicine, its physicians, examiners, employees, officers and agents free from any complaints, claims or demands for damage or otherwise by reason of any act of omission or commission that they, or any of them, may take in connection with this Application, the availability of testing centers, exam administration, the grade or grades given with respect to my examinations or the failure of the ABFM to issue me such certificate. I agree that the ABFM retains the right to deny, revoke, withdraw or suspend certification because of my failure to gain or remain eligible under periodically established ABFM guidelines.

I shall indemnify and hold harmless the ABFM, its physicians, examiners, employees, officers and agents free from any claim “including legal fees” or loss for my breach of this agreement.

I hereby understand and agree that in the event I am certified as a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine, that certification shall continue only for so long as I continue to meet all of the current and future Family Medicine Certification requirements and continue to be in compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct. I further understand and agree that in the event I am no longer in compliance with the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, for any reason or any term, I shall advise the American Board of Family Medicine at 1648 McGrathiana Parkway, Suite 550, Lexington, Kentucky, 40511-1247 and immediately cease identifying myself in any way directly or indirectly as a Diplomate of the American Board of Family Medicine.

It is understood that the decision as to whether my examination qualifies me for a certificate or whether I continue to meet the conditions of eligibility for Family Medicine Certification rests solely and exclusively with the American Board of Family Medicine and that its decision is final.

Arbitration of Disputes

Any case, controversy or dispute which may arise between the applicant and ABFM in connection with the application process, examination and/or the continued eligibility of Family Medicine Certification shall be settled and resolved by binding arbitration under the then prevailing rules of the American Arbitration Association (“AAA”). The arbitration dispute must be filed in Lexington, KY. The decision of the arbitrators shall be final and binding, and judgment may be entered on the award of the arbitrators and enforced in any court of competent jurisdiction. Notwithstanding the foregoing, ABFM may seek injunctive relief in any court of competent jurisdiction as ABFM determines, in its sole and absolute discretion, to be necessary or appropriate to protect the integrity and/or content of the examination.

Governing Law

Any case, controversy, or dispute, which may arise between the applicant and ABFM in connection with the application process and/or the examination, shall be governed in all respects by the laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, without regard to the choice of law rules of such jurisdiction. The applicant hereby submits and irrevocably consents to the exclusive jurisdiction and venue of the state and federal courts located in Lexington, Kentucky for purposes of any legal action that may arise in connection with the application process and/or the examination.

By my acknowledgment on the online Application Form, I intend to be legally bound by the foregoing.