

American Board of Family Medicine



CANDIDATE INFORMATION BOOKLET DESIGNATION OF FOCUSED PRACTICE IN HOSPITAL MEDICINE

EXAMINATION DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2020

SCHEDULE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE DESIGNATION OF FOCUSED PRACTICE IN HOSPITAL MEDICINE EXAMINATION

Application Registration Period: February 14, 2020 – June 15, 2020

Application Submission	Examination Fee
By June 15, 2020	\$1,300

Note: “filing” the application means starting the application and advancing beyond the payment section.

IMPORTANT DATES

June 15, 2020

Last day to:

- Submit an online application
- Submit special testing accommodation (ADA) documentation

June 22, 2020

Last day to:

- Clear all pending application requirements
- Make official name change with ABFM for examination

August 17, 2020

Last day to select testing date/location

September 18, 2020

Last day to withdraw application without incurring a late cancellation fee (\$150)

EXAMINATION DATE

October 1, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

The American Board of Family Medicine congratulates you in your pursuit of this designation! Whether you are attempting for the first time or continuing your designation, we are here to support you as you achieve this important milestone. We understand that family physicians have numerous demands on their time. Our goal is to make the exam application process as efficient as possible, so that you can get back to doing what you do best.

This booklet provides general information concerning the Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine and instructions for completing the online application.

We encourage you to review the entire booklet, but please be sure to read the Agreement section before beginning the application.

The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) has joined the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), in establishing a program for Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine pursuant to the directives of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Board of Directors.

ABIM and the ABFM will be using the same eligibility requirements, exam content and scoring process. The first examination was administered by ABIM on October 25, 2010. The first MOC examination was offered in 2019. This booklet provides schedules and information for The Designation Of Focused Practice In Hospital Medicine exam.

All candidates are encouraged to start the online application and advance beyond the fee payment page prior to the final application filing deadline. Any pending requirements must be completed by the published deadlines. Further, all application requirements must be completed prior to selecting a test date/location.

We will notify you via email of application approval or of any pending requirements as you progress through the online application. Although reminders of pending requirements or any missing materials will be sent by email, you may review your online application at any time for status updates. We keep the applications open as long as possible, but there is a final deadline by which all applications must be completed. Any application that remains incomplete after the final deadline to clear pending requirements will automatically be withdrawn.

If you have questions at any point during the application process, do not hesitate to contact us at (877) 223-7437 or help@theabfm.org. Our Support Center is available to assist Monday – Friday, 9am – 9pm and Saturdays, 9am – 5pm (Eastern Time).

COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

The purpose of this section of the Candidate Information Booklet is to provide essential information about ensuring the board 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.

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 for all examinations. Candidates are encouraged to apply early in the registration period to avoid 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.

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. ABFM staff does not have access to candidate passwords. Passwords may be reset online using the "[Forgot Password](#)" link available on the ABFM homepage.

Personal Information

Candidates should confirm or update all personal information in the Physician Portfolio on the Contact Information page. Uneditable fields 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 records. 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 pending application requirements. 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 wall certificate will be mailed to. Address information may be updated through the Physician Portfolio at any time by clicking the Contact Information link.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

At the time of this publication (July 2019), European Union (EU) residents are not eligible to register for ABFM examinations. For further clarification, contact us at (877) 223-7437.

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 may 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

ExamRegistration Period: February 14, 2020 – June 15, 2020

Application Submission	Examination Fee
By June 15, 2020	\$1,300

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.

The online payment option of the American Board of Family Medicine 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 near the bottom of the window to indicate that SSL encryption is being used. Consequently, candidate’s 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 may 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 Designation of Focused Practice link and then selecting the Withdraw option. By selecting the withdraw option the candidate will be cancelling their current application and the fees for that examination will be applied to the next testing window. An examination fee may 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 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.

Requirements

Initial Designation Requirements

- Current primary certification in family medicine
- All candidates must be in compliance with ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct which includes holding medical license(s) which meet the licensure requirements of the Guidelines.
- Verification of at least 3 years of unsupervised hospital medicine practice experience in the United States or Canada that fully meets the requirements of one of the qualifying pathways.
- Attestation by the Diplomate and an approved hospital officer at the practicing hospital verifying active clinical practice in the hospital setting and the required patient encounters within a given time period and participation in a hospital medicine fellowship program, if this option is being used to partially meet the patient volume requirement
- Completion of six (6) approved Family Medicine Certification Activities - Hospital Medicine related activities in the last ten (10) years, of which four (4) activities must have been completed in the last three (3) years with one being an approved Performance Improvement activity
- Completion of a formal application including the full examination fee for Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine
- Successful performance on the one-day computer-based Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine Examination

CURRENT DIPLOMATE STATUS. To submit an application for the Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine Examination, candidates must be currently certified by the American Board of Family Medicine (primary certification). Primary certification in Family Medicine must be held at the time of application and examination as well as throughout the entire time for holding such designation.

SATISFACTORY DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICE EXPERIENCE IN HOSPITAL MEDICINE. Candidates may apply via one of the two practice pathways listed below. The candidate and an approved officer of the hospital(s) at which the candidate practices will need to attest to one of the following:

- Direct Patient Care Pathway (i.e., full-time hospital practice) Requires that the Diplomate demonstrate having spent at least three years of unsupervised Hospital Medicine practice experience in the U.S. or Canada that meet the following criteria:
 - a minimum of 1000 Hospital patient encounters (limited to one encounter per patient per day) per year in the last 3 years, or 3000 in the last 3 years
 - submission of Hospital Practice Verification Form signed by supervisor at hospital(s) where employed to attest to 3000 hospital patient encounters in the last 3 years

Completion of one year formal training in a Hospital Medicine Fellowship program may be counted for a maximum of 1000 patient encounters when applying through the Direct Patient Care Pathway.

- Clinical /Systems Pathway (i.e., full-time hospital medicine professional activity with part-time hospital practice) Requires that the Diplomate demonstrate having spent at least three years of unsupervised Hospital Medicine practice experience in the U.S. or Canada that meet the following criteria:
 - a minimum of 250 hospital patient encounters (limited to one encounter per patient per day) per year in the last three years or 750 in the last three years
 - these encounters must comprise at least 75% of total clinical activity, and

- at least 50% of the remaining non-clinical professional time must be directed toward improving the care of hospitalized patients

Both the “Direct Patient Care Pathway” and “Clinical/Systems Pathway” require substantiation of all hospital practice experience by submission of the Verification of Hospital Medicine Practice Experience Form. This verification form will be presented within the online application.

For either of the pathways, the three-year practice threshold requires that candidates have not been in a residency or fellowship training program (other than a fellowship in Hospital Medicine) in the last three years prior to seeking designation of focused practice in Hospital Medicine.

The ABFM will randomly audit the attestation process via communication with the selected officer of the hospital and enrollment is considered agreement to this audit process.

VERIFICATION OF HOSPITAL MEDICINE PRACTICE EXPERIENCE. Within the application there will be a form that candidates must print out, and indicate the name of the hospital, range of dates and number of patient encounters that comprise the required practice experience necessary to meet the requirements of the pathway chosen. This Verification of Hospital Medicine Practice Experience Form should then be given to an approved officer of the hospital to have him/her attest to having direct knowledge of the candidate’s three years of unsupervised hospital medicine experience. This form must be signed by the appropriate officer at the hospital where the candidate obtained the patient encounters to attest to practice levels and could be one of the following: Board of Directors Chair Person or Board of Directors President, Chair of Family Medicine, Chief Executive Officer, Chief Medical Officer, Division Director, Section Chief, Service Line Chief, or Medical Director.

For those applying via the Direct Patient Pathway, there is also a form for verifying any hospital medicine fellowship completed. One year of hospital medicine fellowship may be counted for a maximum of 1000 patient encounters when applying through the Direct Patient Pathway.

If hospital practice experience was acquired at more than one hospital, a form should be provided to each hospital for their attestation.

THREE YEARS SINCE RESIDENCY OR FELLOWSHIP. Physicians may not have participated in a residency or fellowship training program in the last three (3) years prior to applying for the DFPHM examination. However, this does not apply to formal training in a Hospital Medicine Fellowship.

HOSPITAL MEDICINE FOCUSED PRACTICE DESIGNATION ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS. Candidates must complete six (6) approved Family Medicine Certification Activities - Hospital Medicine related activities in the last ten (10) years, of which four (4) activities must have been completed in the last three (3) years with one of the four being an approved Performance Improvement activity. Three years will be determined by the three year period just prior to application date.

The Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) activities, Clinical Self-Assessment (CSA) activities and Performance Improvement (PI) activity requirements are not required to be completed prior to the exam, however in order to be listed on the ABFM website with the Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine, candidates must pass the exam and have completed the six (6) required activities in the last ten (10) years.

The following are acceptable American Board of Family Medicine Certification Activities for meeting the Hospital Medicine Activity requirements:

- KSAs: Asthma, Cerebrovascular Disease, Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes, Heart Failure, Hospital Medicine, Hypertension, Pain Management.
- CSAs: Asthma, Cerebrovascular Disease, Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes, Heart Failure, Hospital Medicine, Hypertension, Pain Management.
- PIs: Asthma, Coronary Artery Disease, Diabetes, Heart Failure, Hypertension.

The following are acceptable activities provided by other organizations:

- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) METRIC - Diabetes
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) METRIC - Asthma
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) METRIC - Coronary Artery Disease
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) METRIC - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) METRIC - Hypertension
- National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Physician Recognition Programs - Diabetes
- National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Physician Recognition Programs - Heart Disease/Stroke
- Wisconsin Medical Society's Improving Advance Care Planning
- Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) activity - Managing Childhood Asthma in Primary Care
- American College of Physicians (ACP) activity ACOVEprime - Closing the Gap: Diabetes Care and Cardiovascular Risk
- Novant Health activity Ambulatory Care Diabetes Performance Improvement CME
- American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) – Patient Safety Improvement Program
- The Permanente Federation (TPF) Adult Medicine Continued Quality Improvement Program

Continuing Designation Requirements

Candidates seeking continuing Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine must be certified by the American Board of Family Medicine and must be Diplomates in good standing at the time of the examination. Candidates must be in compliance with ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct which includes holding medical license(s) which meet the licensure requirements of the Guidelines. In addition, all candidates must have previously held Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine by examination with the American Board of Family Medicine.

Demographics

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 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 certification more meaningful and useful to you.

Medical License

To obtain and maintain certification, all candidates and Diplomates must either (1) hold a medical license which is currently active, valid and full in the United States, its territories, or Canada, and the candidate should not be subject to any practice privilege limitations in any jurisdictions in the United States, its territories, or Canada (referred to as an "Unlimited License") or (2) qualify to select and actually select the status of Clinically Inactive, and hold either an Unlimited License, or a Qualified Clinically Inactive Medical License. Candidates and Diplomates must also be continuously in compliance with the ABFM [Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct](#).

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 meets the requirements listed above. If the medical license does not meet the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, the candidate must contact the ABFM Credentials Department at license@theabfm.org.

It is the responsibility of the physician to inform the ABFM in writing, by letter, email, or notification through the medical license page in the application or the Physician Portfolio, immediately following any action by a licensing authority. Should a physician be uncertain about whether or not they are meeting the Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, a written inquiry should be made to the Board immediately.

Any candidate sitting for an examination who does not meet the ABFM Guidelines will have their examination invalidated and the examination fee will be forfeited. Eligibility for examination will not be reinstated until the physician is in full compliance with the Guidelines. If any action by a licensing authority is taken after this application is filed, but prior to the examination, it is still the responsibility of the applicant to report the action to the ABFM prior to examination. If a candidate is appealing a decision relative to their certification status to the Credentials Committee, they are permitted to sit for the examination with the understanding that if the appeal is unsuccessful, their examination will be invalidated and the examination fee will be forfeited.

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 pending application requirements. 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

Any outside items are prohibited in the examination room. All of the following items must be approved by the ABFM prior to the examination and appropriate documentation submitted to Pearson VUE, the testing vendor. Should a candidate require any personal item during the examination, whether due to a medical condition or otherwise, please contact Stephen Huesing at shuesing@theabfm.org. All requests must be submitted prior to the final application deadline.

Items that Require Pre-Approval

Pre-approval is required for the following items to be used during testing (all other personal items must be stored in lockers):

- diabetic supplies
- water/beverage in a sports bottle
- wet naps for a person with sleep apnea
- extra chair
- sunglasses
- glare screen
- important medication (asthma inhaler, nitroglycerin)
- sweater
- snack
- foot stool
- pillow
- glucose monitoring device

Items Provided at Test Center

The following items are provided by Pearson VUE at the test center:

- The test administrator will provide erasable noteboards that will be replaced as needed during testing. (Note: Candidates also will be able to type and save notes in a pop-up box that accompanies each exam question.)
- If candidates are easily distracted by noise, including keyboard noise, they may request earplugs and headphones from the test administrator. Candidates own earplugs, headphones or other personal devices are not permitted in the test centers.

Prohibited Items in Examination Room

The following items may be brought to the test center, but must be stored in a locker: All electronic devices, including cell phones, cameras, recording devices, PDAs, calculators, personal digital assistants, pagers, and beepers.

In addition, the following are not permitted:

- Watches. The time of day will be displayed on a clock in the testing room, and the time remaining in the exam session will be displayed on the candidate's computer screen.
- Calipers, nomograms or other interpretive aids.
- Study materials, books, notes, scratch paper, etc.
- Pens, pencils, highlighters and other writing instruments. The test administrator will provide noteboards or scratch pad that will be replaced as needed. Noteboards and scratch pads may not be removed from the testing room and must be turned in to the test administrator when the candidate complete each exam session. In addition, they may type and save notes in the "Notes" section available for each exam question. Noteboards, scratch pads and the "Notes" section are provided for their convenience and are not considered in the evaluation of their exam.
- Suitcases, briefcases, backpacks.

- Wallets and purses.
- Tobacco products.
- Food and drinks. Candidates may bring lunch to the test center, but there is no access to refrigeration or lounge facilities. Water fountains are available at most test centers. Candidates may also bring bottled water to store in candidate's secure locker.
- Certain essential medical items (e.g. nitroglycerin, asthma inhalers, diabetic supplies) may be brought into the testing room with prior approval of ABFM.

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 pending requirements are cleared, the ABFM considers the candidate to be approved for the examination. The ABFM will automatically notify the ABIM that the candidate is eligible to select a testing date, time, and location.

Shortly after the candidate's ABFM online application has been approved, we will notify the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM). Since ABIM is responsible for the administration of the examination, they will send the candidate a communication with instructions for contacting Pearson VUE to schedule a test center and appointment time.

The first communication from ABIM is scheduled to be sent on February 25, 2020. Candidates must contact Pearson VUE and schedule their appointment no later than August 17, 2020 for the Examination.

Appointments are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. When candidates contact Pearson VUE, they will need their ID number and should indicate that they are an ABFM candidate taking the ABIM exam for Hospital Medicine. Pearson VUE should provide a confirmation number for the appointment once it is scheduled. After the appointment is scheduled, Pearson VUE will send a communication confirming the date and time of the examination appointment.

For a listing of available Pearson VUE testing centers, please visit: www.pearsonvue.com/abim.

Testing Locations

United States, U.S. Territories, and Canada

Pearson VUE provides testing throughout the U.S. as well as several international locations. 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.pearsonvue.com/abim and click on "Find a test center."

International Test Centers

The ABFM and Pearson VUE offer testing at several international locations. Pearson VUE 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.pearsonvue.com/abim click on "Find a test center," and search for the country of interest to see if there is a location there. Candidates searching for locations abroad that do not appear to be available should contact the ABFM to inquire about potential options.

Once an international testing location has been selected, candidates will be required to submit an international testing fee of \$500. This is an additional cost beyond the normal application fee and is applicable only to the international sites. After an international location has been selected, candidates must submit a certified check or money order in the amount of \$500 to the American Board of Family Medicine via postal mail. Along with the certified check or money order, candidates will enclose a note with their ID, name, address, the international site selected, and the examination name (Hospital Medicine).

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.

Reschedule or Withdraw

Reschedule

Should a candidate wish to change their test center; they will need to contact Pearson VUE directly no later than August 17, 2020. Do not contact the ABFM to request a change in test center. The contact information for Pearson VUE will be provided in the communication candidates receive from ABIM about scheduling their exam and in the confirmation they receive from Pearson VUE.

Withdraw

Candidates who need to withdraw from the examination must do so through the ABFM website by September 18, 2020. *Candidates should not contact Pearson VUE directly to cancel an appointment.* Cancelling or withdrawing from the examination after the aforementioned deadlines will incur a cancellation/seat fee of \$150.

Please refer to our Refund policy for additional information regarding a refund.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION

Content

The Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine (DFPHM) Examination will be a comprehensive one-day computer based examination of multiple-choice questions in the single-best-answer format with an absolute standard for passing. The DFPHM Examination blueprint is available on the ABIM website: <https://www.abim.org/> ABIM refers to the exam on their website as “Hospital Medicine Maintenance of Certification Exam.”

Facts About the Examination

Examination Admittance & Testing Vendor Information

The staff at each Pearson VUE center will follow standardized procedures to ensure that the operation of the test center meets the ABFM, ABIM, and Pearson VUE testing criteria. The information below describes the process that will occur when candidates arrive at the test center.

1. Candidates will present two (2) personal identifications, as described below.
2. A digital fingerprint, security wand, signature, and photograph will be taken. Candidates cannot take the exam without having a fingerprint, signature, and picture taken.
3. Personal items are not permitted in the testing room. Candidates will be required to leave personal belongings outside the testing room, including cell phone, PDA, watch, wallet, and/or purse. A secure individual storage locker will be provided for these items. Storage space is limited, however, so candidates should plan accordingly. The ABFM, ABIM and Pearson VUE assume no responsibility for candidates' personal belongings. While the temperature in the exam room should be comfortable, dressing in layers is recommended. Outerwear (jackets, coats, etc.) are not permitted; however, sweaters are permitted. Sweaters or clothing removed cannot be hung on the back of the chair but must be placed in the storage locker.
4. Candidates will be asked to read an “ABIM Candidate Rules Checklist” agreeing to the security terms of the administration of the exam.
5. The test administrator will provide a scratch paper pad that may be replaced as needed during testing. (Note: Candidates also will be able to type and save notes in a pop-up box that accompanies each exam question.)
6. Candidates who are easily distracted by noise may request earplugs or headphones from the test administrator. Other than those provided by the testing center, headphones and electronic devices are not permitted in the test center. If desired, candidates may bring their own disposable earplugs into the test room.
7. The testing administrator will give a short orientation and then escort each candidate to a computer terminal/testing station in the testing room. Individuals who are left-handed may request that the mouse be moved to the left side of the computer monitor and reset to operate as a left-handed mouse.
8. The Continuing Designation Examination is open-book, meaning that you will have access to an online external resource (**UpToDate**[®]). You can take the [exam tutorial](#) and visit the [UpToDate User Academy for ABIM Exam](#) to practice using the open-book feature. Please note that certain features of UpToDate, including those that access external websites like Society Guidelines, will not be available during the exam for security reasons. Personal login details are not needed to access this utility.

Study Materials

The ABFM does not provide comprehensive review materials. However, candidates may find it helpful to read a section on our website titled “Prepare For The Examination.” This may be found here: <https://www.theabfm.org/continue-certification/cognitive-expertise/one-day-fmc-exam/Exam-Info>.

Candidates may also access an examination tutorial on the ABIM website <http://www.abim.org>. This tutorial gives candidates an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the functionality of the examination software; it is not a content review.

The ABIM suggests that regardless of the method used to prepare, it is important it be broad based and focused on the clinical aspects of the specialty. The ABIM found that in correspondence with candidates who have had difficulty with the examination over a period of time and who ultimately are successful, the major factor to which they attribute their success is an intensive, disciplined review of the specialty. They speak to the comprehensive review of one of the standard textbooks, combined with a self-assessment program that provides the opportunity to practice answering questions while giving feedback on test performance.

Pearson VUE Information

Pearson VUE is the computer-based testing vendor the ABIM uses to administer the exam. Candidates may locate a test center or obtain specific directions to a test site at www.pearsonvue.com/abim.

Examination Day Schedule

Pearson VUE is the computer-based testing vendor the ABIM uses to administer the exam. Candidates may locate a test center or obtain specific directions to a test site at www.pearsonvue.com/abim.

Sample Schedule:

Registration of Candidates	Varies
Tutorial	Optional, up to 30 minutes
Instructions and Pledge of Honesty	Up to 10 minutes
First Session	Up to two hours (maximum 55 questions)
Break*	Optional, up to 100 minutes (divided into 3 breaks)
Second Session	Up to two hours (maximum 55 questions)
Break*	Optional, up to 100 minutes (divided into 3 breaks)
Third Session	Up to two hours (maximum 55 questions)
Break*	Optional, up to 100 minutes (divided into 3 breaks)
Fourth Session	Up to two hours (maximum 55 questions)
Optional Survey	Up to 10 minutes
Total	Approximately 10 hours

* Candidates will have 100 minutes of pooled break time to use during the examination. 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 may 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.

Examination Administration Protocols and Procedures

Violation of Procedures - Registration Process

GOVERNMENT-ISSUED FORM OF IDENTIFICATION. When the candidate arrives at the test center, they will be required to present primary and secondary identifications listed below:

Primary ID: A current government-issued ID that contains a recent photograph of the candidate and their signature. A valid driver's license, passport, or state identification card is acceptable. Candidates will not be allowed to take the examination with an expired ID.

Note: Any form of ID issued by the Syrian government cannot be used as a primary ID, per U.S. government regulations. The name that appears must be the same as the name the Board has on record for the candidate.

Secondary ID: Does not require a photograph, but must include the candidate's signature. For example, a social security card, valid credit card, or ATM card is acceptable. Note: Candidates without both a valid primary and secondary ID will not be admitted to the exam room.

The name that appears on your ID must match the name on record with ABFM. If the name on your ID does not match the name on file you will not be admitted to the exam.

TEST CENTER SECURITY. As a secure means for the candidate to enter and exit the testing room, a scan by a metal detector wand will be used. The scanning 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 admittance into the examination room.

Additional Pearson VUE 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 Pearson VUE). If the candidate has simply removed any of these items from his or her locker but the item has not been accessed, the test administrator will request the item to be replaced in the locker and will remind the candidate of the requirements during active testing. The candidate may continue testing without penalty. However, if the prohibited information or personal item has been used/accessed or is found in the testing room, 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 or ABIM candidate, the candidate will be advised that a violation of ABIM 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 current application will be cancelled and 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.

Irregular Behavior

The Board’s examinations are copyrighted and administered in secure testing centers by test administrators who are responsible for maintaining the integrity and security of the certification process. Test administrators are required to report to the Board any irregular or improper behavior by a candidate, such as giving or obtaining information or aid, looking at test material of others, removing examination materials from the test center, taking notes, bringing electronic devices (e.g., beepers, pagers, cell phones, etc.) into the examination, failing to comply with time limits or instructions, talking, or other disruptive behavior. In addition, as part of its effort to assure examination integrity, ABIM utilizes data forensic techniques that use statistical analyses of test-response data to identify patterns of test fraud, including cheating and piracy. Irregular or improper behavior that is observed, made apparent by data forensics, statistical analysis, or uncovered by other means will be considered a subversion of the certification process and will constitute grounds for invalidation of a candidate’s examination.

Examination Results

After the examination is given, it will be analyzed and evaluated to ensure the reliability of individual results. Score reports will be available on ABFM website (www.theabfm.org), in the Physician Portfolio once the results data is received from the ABIM. ABIM expects to release results within 3 months following the last date in the examination window. Candidates will be notified via email when results are available.

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 Designation

Those who are successful on the examination and complete of all requirements for the program will be awarded the Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine (DFPHM). The designation will initially be valid for a ten-year period.

If, for any reason, primary certification in Family Medicine is not maintained (e.g., expiration, revocation, etc.), Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine will simultaneously be withdrawn at the time of the loss of the primary certificate. Upon restoration of the Family Medicine certificate, the DFPHM will simultaneously be restored for the remainder of the current period of designation.

Candidates may opt to take the continuing designation examination before the last year of their period of designation. Should the exam attempt be successful, a new period of designation will begin and any remaining years from the previous designation are forfeited.

Validity Period for Successful Examination

After a successful examination attempt, candidates pursuing initial designation have the 10 calendar years following their examination year to meet all requirements for designation of focused practice in Hospital Medicine. Designation begins when all requirements have been met. Period of designation is limited to the 10 years following the successful exam attempt.

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 ABFM 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 ABFM 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, or has otherwise misrepresented the person's certification status. In such cases, and in cases where the offending party is not currently certified, the Board reserves the right to revoke, suspend, and/or prohibit participation in 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 timely appeals the suspension to the ABFM Credentials Committee, the six (6) year period shall be tolled until the action of the Board is determined to be final and enforceable by the ABFM Credentials Committee.

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 the 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 ABFM examinations 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 Board 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 ABFM. 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 continuously abide by the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure and Personal Conduct which includes obtaining and maintaining medical licensure which meets the requirements of the Guidelines. 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 Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine 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 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 Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine Examination shall apply.

If my Application to sit for the Designation of Focused Practice in Hospital Medicine 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 Internal Medicine (ABIM) 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. The dry erase board or other note taking surface provided by Pearson VUE is intended for exam testing notes only and must be erased and returned to the test administrator when not actively testing. Any notes taken during the exam and removed from the workstation will be considered exam content. Other than the permitted use of the dry erase board or other note taking surface provided by Pearson VUE during the exam, no one is permitted to reproduce the test questions and/or answers in whole or in part, make written notes of the test content, or electronically copy, record and/or transfer test questions or preparatory material. 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 Pearson 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 Pearson VUE 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 scheduled 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 Internal 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 ABIM, 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/ABIM and acknowledge that the ABFM/ABIM has the right to invalidate my exam, forfeit the full exam fee and pursue any legal action ABFM deems necessary or appropriate.

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. Please contact the ABFM for the rescore form needed. 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 release and to hold the American Board of Family Medicine, its physicians, examiners, employees, officers, directors, 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, the failure of the ABFM to issue me such certificate, the subsequent revocation of any certificate issued to me by the ABFM, or my continued eligibility for certification. 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, directors, and agents from any claims or liabilities, including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs arising from 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 activity 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 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 for 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, the examination, or continued eligibility for certification 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, the examination, and/or continued eligibility for certification.

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