

# Family Medicine Continuous Certification



We are proud to partner with you in pursuing lifelong learning, regularly assessing your clinical knowledge, and improving care in practice.

The activities that you engage in as part of continuous certification signal to your patients and colleagues that you are actively working to keep up with the rapidly changing medical literature and are distinguishing yourself as a physician dedicated to lifelong learning. Patients value knowing that their physician is board certified.

Family Medicine Certification is a voluntary process that emphasizes ongoing participation in activities that assess important physician characteristics: Professionalism, Self-Assessment, Performance Improvement, and Cognitive Expertise. We believe these characteristics encourage clinical excellence and benefit both the physicians and their patients. Your board certification is valid for as long as you successfully meet the continuous certification requirements.

- To maintain your ABFM Family Medicine Certification you will need to complete a series of certification activities in separate 3-year windows, called “stages.”
- Continued certification depends upon meeting 3-year stage requirements and passing the Family Medicine Certification Examination every 10 years or by participating in the alternative longitudinal assessment method (FMCLA).
- As long as you continue to meet your 3-year stage requirements, you will be listed as a board-certified Family Physician on the ABFM website.

**Congratulations on your status  
as an American Board of  
Family Medicine Diplomate!**

## Family Medicine Certification Components

### Professionalism

Fulfillment of this component requires compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct, which includes holding medical license(s) which meet the licensure requirements of the Guidelines.

### Self-Assessment and Lifelong Learning

Fulfillment of this component requires completion of a minimum of one Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) activity during the Certification stage and completion of the required credits of Continuing Medical Education (CME).

### Cognitive Expertise

Fulfillment of this component requires the successful completion of the Family Medicine Certification Examination or participation in the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment during the required time period.

### Performance Improvement

Fulfillment of this component requires completion of a minimum of one Performance Improvement (PI) activity for clinically active physicians during the Certification stage.



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## Maintaining Certification

To maintain your certification, you will need to complete all requirements of the Continuous Certification Process. This process is divided into continuous 3-year stages, with an exam every 10 years. Within each stage, there are minimum requirements for Knowledge Self-Assessment (KSA) and Performance Improvement (PI) activities, as well as total points and CME credits. Points are earned through completion of Self-Assessment Activities, e.g., KSAs, Continuous Knowledge Self-Assessment (CKSA) activities, or National Journal Club (NJC) article assessments. Every 10 years, you will choose to either take the one-day exam or participate in the alternative longitudinal assessment (FMCLA) method for demonstrating your cognitive expertise. Additionally, you must always remain in compliance with ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct.

Continuous Certification Process		Years 1-3	Years 4-6	Years 7-9	Years 10-12	
Points Requirement (50 points required per 3-year stage)	Self-Assessment Minimum 1 KSA, 4 CKSAs, or 10 NJC articles	10 points	10 points	10 points	YEAR 10	10 points
	Performance Improvement Minimum 1 PI activity	20 points	20 points	20 points	Complete One-Day Examination OR Begin FMCLA Quarterly Longitudinal Assessment*	20 points
	Additional Self-Assessment and PI Activities Your choice	20 points	20 points	20 points		20 points
CME Requirement	Continuing Medical Education Minimum 50% from Division 1 Credit	150 CME	150 CME	150 CME		150 CME
Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct Requirement	Continually comply with ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct Continually hold a valid and unlimited medical license	✓	✓	✓		✓
Annual Certification Fee Requirement	Submit an Annual \$200 Certification Fee** (or \$600 per 3-year stage)	✓	✓	✓		✓

CERTIFICATION PROCESS CONTINUES

\*The online applications for the one-day exam and FMCLA open in fall of year nine and must be completed prior to enrollment in either exam option.

\*\*The \$200 annual certification fees allow you to complete all of these activities and to utilize as many additional activities beyond the requirements as you wish for your own learning.

## Clinically Active/Inactive Designation

Physicians may self-designate whether they are clinically active or clinically inactive. Physicians who are **clinically active** will be able to meet their PI requirement by selecting from one of the many options in your MyABFM Portfolio. Physicians who are **clinically inactive** will be exempt from meeting the PI requirement and will meet their stage requirements with additional self-assessment activities. In circumstances where career changes take place, your clinical status can be updated online in your MyABFM Portfolio. It is not necessary to update your clinical status for a vacation or other short-term leave of absence. A change from clinically inactive to clinically active will require subsequent completion of a PI activity.

## Retired Status

Physicians may also self-designate “retired” status inside the MyABFM Portfolio. This designation does not change your board certification status. However, it will more accurately reflect your status as a family physician on the ABFM website in the Find a Physician directory and in the American Board of Medical Specialties physician directory, informing the public and credentialing entities of your retired status. Retired physicians may choose to maintain their certification for as long as they wish, provided they continue to meet all of the requirements.



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1648 McGrathiana Pkwy, Suite 550  
Lexington, KY 40511  
877-223-7437 • [theabfm.org](http://theabfm.org)



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