

Greetings, colleagues, and we hope that you, your practices, and your family are well. It is now almost 15 months since COVID-19 reached our shores. I believe the pandemic will have a lasting effect on family medicine and, with the push of a new civil rights movement, society. ABFM has been busy in response—most immediately, working with all of you to delay continuing certification requirements and support practice change. We have also worked hard to increase the value of certification, promote residency transformation, and encourage policy change to support family physicians and their practice.


We have a number of positive updates since the last Phoenix. Rather than sending a full summer edition, however, I wanted to use this message to describe these briefly and provide links for you to seek additional information, as desired.



Warren Newton, MD, MPH
President and CEO

FMCLA Approved as a Permanent Alternative to the One-Day Exam

It is with great pleasure that we announce that the Committee on Continuing Certification of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) has approved the Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA) as a *permanent* alternative to the one-day exam. The feedback from participants in the first three cohorts has been overwhelmingly positive and we believe this is an optimal approach for both learning and assessment. In fact, the single most frequent feedback we receive is “I am learning as I go!” You can find more information about FMCLA [here](#).

FMCLA 
Family Medicine Certification
LONGITUDINAL ASSESSMENT

New MyABFM Portfolio Released

Another exciting advancement aimed at helping family physicians better understand and more easily navigate their certification activities is the release of the new [MyABFM Portfolio](#). Formerly the *Physician Portfolio*, the MyABFM Portfolio is our new and improved website designed to provide a convenient, easy to navigate, and personalized tool for Diplomates to track their progress with continuous certification and make certification easier to understand. I encourage each of you to log in and check out the new features designed to help simplify managing your certification activities and requirements.



New Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct Approved by ABFM Board of Directors

Professionalism is central to medicine's social contract with society and involves the commitment to patients and to each other that we will place the interests of patients above our own, maintain standards of competence and integrity, and demonstrate trustworthiness with patients, colleagues, co-workers and the public. After more than a year of study and discussions, the ABFM Board of Directors recently approved new [Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure, and Personal Conduct](#). The newly revised guidelines provide enhanced clarity about ABFM expectations for professionalism; include a new section on Special Circumstances that the Professionalism Committee of our Board of Directors can refer to as they balance their commitment to both Diplomates and the public; define behaviors of concern related to professionalism that do not involve license actions; and describe the pathways back to certification for anyone who has violated the professionalism guidelines.

ABFM Research Department to Launch Equity and Diversity Policy Brief Series

The ABFM research department recently [announced](#) a partnership with the Robert Graham Center for Policy Studies in Washington D.C. to launch a multi-year policy brief series on Examining Equity and Diversity in the Family Medicine Workforce to be featured in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine (JABFM). Policy briefs published as part of the Equity and Diversity series will present data about the family medicine workforce using an equity lens to inform opportunities for action and future research. In further commitment to uplift diverse perspectives, the team is actively seeking engagement from family physicians and friends of family medicine of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic, and gender identities to lend their ideas and voices to commentaries that accompany each policy brief. If you are interested in contributing as a commentator or would like more information on the Examining Equity and Diversity in the Family Medicine Workforce Policy Brief Series, please complete the [volunteer inquiry form](#).

ABFM National Journal Club Pilot – Launching Soon!

We are planning to launch a new ABFM National Journal Club at the beginning of August. This will be offered as a service to all Diplomates and Family Medicine residents to support their efforts to stay up to date through access to articles that are important to the discipline. The committee responsible for this activity has ranked the



ABFM
NATIONAL
JOURNAL CLUB

articles highly for their relevance to family medicine, impact on practice, and strength of methodology.

Diplomates will be able to choose articles of interest and get access to the PDF of the article directly. Our goal is help family physicians stay current with the best medical literature, support shared decision making with patients and families, and advocate for their patients with subspecialists, health systems and payers. As an added value, physicians can earn certification points for each article activity completed and can fulfill the KSA requirement for their certification stage by completing 10 article activities. Enrollment in the pilot will be available for all Diplomates and Family Medicine residents for a short time period, after which it will close until the process and impact can be evaluated and a permanent version can be implemented. Be on the lookout for announcements, so you don't miss the opportunity to be in the pilot!

ABFM Welcomes New Board Members and Officers

We are pleased to announce the election of four new officers and four new board members. The new officers elected at ABFM's spring board meeting in April are: Michael K. Magill, MD, of Salt Lake City, Utah as Chair; Lauren S. Hughes, MD, MPH, MSc, of Aurora, Colorado as Chair-Elect; Wendy Biggs, MD, of Saginaw, Michigan

as Treasurer; and Daniel Spogen, MD, of Reno, Nevada as Member-at-Large of the Executive Committee. In addition, the ABFM welcomes this year's new members to the Board of Directors: Joan Anzia, MD, of Chicago, Illinois; Tiffany Christensen of Cary, North Carolina; Carlos R. Gonzales, MD, of Nogales, Arizona; and Tiffani Maycock, DO, MS, of Selma, Alabama. The new board members will each serve a five-year term. Full biographies of the new Board members can be found [here](#).

ABMS Call for Comments on new Draft Standards for Continuing Certification

After more than two years of reflection, study, debate and consensus-building, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) has made its new draft Standards for Continuing Certification available for public comment. These new standards will form the road map for all ABMS medical specialty boards to follow for assuring that they provide high-quality certification programs. ABFM was pleased to have broad representation on the task forces that led to their development. Our current processes are in compliance with most new standards, we are evaluating some other new standards for their impact and we have already taken action to implement many of the changes embodied in the new standards, with many of the improvements mentioned in this message. We encourage you to participate in the [Call for Comments](#) of the ABMS Draft Standards now through July 8, 2021 at 11:59 pm CST. Your voice is important, and **it will matter** to this process.

Re-Envisioning Family Medicine Residency Training Education

The national summit on the future of Family Medicine residency education was held in December 2020. Over 3,500 family physicians and residents participated in focus groups, surveys, and the summit. We are excited to share that the peer reviewed evidence-based reviews and commentaries have been completed and are being posted on the Family Medicine journal website. They also will be sent to the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Family Medicine Review Committee and will be published in a dedicated issue of Family Medicine in July. The summit website [RE-ENVISIONING FAMILY MEDICINE RESIDENCY EDUCATION](#) provides key documents, the results of focus groups and surveys, and will add the articles when they are published.



The ball is now in the court of ACGME committee. They have defined the themes for the new standards and will now begin to write a more-specific version. Our community will have a chance to give input—speak up!—and the ABFM will also consider any changes necessary in board eligibility going forward.

New NASEM Report Released – Implementing High-Quality Primary Care

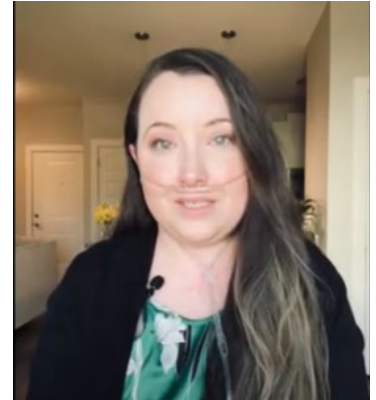
The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) recently released a landmark report - [Implementing High-Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care](#). This report puts forth an evidence-based plan with actionable objectives and recommendations for implementing high-quality primary care in the United States. This is the first report in 25 years that addresses what is needed to produce a robust primary care workforce, and it builds upon the recommendations from the 1996 Institute of Medicine report, "Primary Care: America's Health in a New Era." With significant contributions by committee co-chair Bob Phillips, MD, MSPH, founding Executive Director of



ABFM's Center for Professionalism & Value in Health Care, the implementation plan balances national needs for scalable solutions while allowing for adaptations to meet local needs.

A Tribute Poem for Physicians: As Mountains Call

It is often said the more things change, the more they stay the same. There is much to celebrate as we continue to deliver positive changes in family medicine certification. Yet, change can often happen unexpectedly, like a diagnosis bringing the weight of a "mountain" onto a family or that of a rapidly developing global pandemic. At our recent board meeting, outgoing public member Melissa Thomason gifted ABFM with a message of support for the sacred work that family physicians do each day. "[A Tribute Poem for Physicians: As Mountains Call](#)" reminds us of the challenges of the past 15 months, and a look at the meaning in our work over a lifetime, as seen through the eyes of a grateful patient. Melissa's input as a patient, a patient advocate, and a public member of our board for the last six years has been invaluable and a constant reminder of our motto: *Quality Healthcare, Public Trust...Setting the Standards in Family Medicine*. I invite you to watch Melissa read her poem that she delivered during the spring 2021 Board meeting. Her heartfelt account of her illness and medical care are sure to inspire.



Melissa Thomason
Former ABFM Board Member

As we move forward together, let us heed Melissa's sage words, "*But if together we rise to the call, then together we can build lives full of living.*"

We are cautiously optimistic about the course of the pandemic. Be well, and keep in touch.

###