

BOARD NEWS

ABFM Seeks ABMS Approval for CAQs

ABFM to Co-sponsor Hospice and Palliative Medicine CAQ

The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) has joined with 10 fellow American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Boards to offer a Hospice and Palliative Medicine Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ). This new certification was recently approved by the ABMS and marks the first time 10 ABMS Member Boards have collaborated to offer certification in one specific area.

In addition to Family Medicine, the ABMS Boards of Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Psychiatry and Neurology, Radiology and Surgery are co-sponsoring the certification. Several ABMS Member Boards received a joint request from a number of Hospice and Palliative Medicine-focused organizations proposing the development of certification in Hospice and Palliative Medicine.

The Hospice and Palliative Medicine CAQ will be offered to family physicians who are certified by the ABFM and are in good standing at the time of examination. The CAQ is renewable every 10 years, dependent on the completion of certain educational, training, and examination requirements.

“Adding Hospice and Palliative Medicine as an ABMS subspecialty is a great complement to so many of our areas of specialty medicine,” said Stephen H. Miller, MD, MPH (President and Chief Executive Officer of the ABMS). “Physicians who choose to become certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine are formally showing their commitment to providing quality care in assessing and managing the physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering faced by patients with life-limiting illnesses and their families.”

The first certification examination for the Hospice and Palliative Medicine CAQ offered by the ABFM will be administered in 2008.

ABFM Seeks ABMS Approval for Sleep Medicine CAQ

At its Interim Meeting in October, the Board of Directors of the ABFM approved the creation of a CAQ in Sleep Medicine and directed staff to seek approval from the ABMS for the ABFM's co-sponsorship of certification in Sleep Medicine along with the ABMS Boards of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Neurology, and Otolaryngology.

Scientific inquiries over the last several years have revealed the vital importance of sleep to overall human health and well-being. Consequently, the field of Sleep Medicine has seen tremendous growth over the last 15 years. A report earlier this year by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (IOM), “Sleep Disorders and Sleep Deprivation: An Unmet Public Health Problem,” revealed the widespread prevalence of sleep disorders and their negative effect on a significant portion of the American population. An estimated 50 to 70 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders, and the majority of these people are presently undiagnosed. According to the National Institutes of Health, approximately 10% of the population suffers from chronic insomnia.

Sleep deprivation, aging, and obesity are all growing concerns that contribute to the problems associated with sleep disorders. While the number of board-certified sleep medicine specialists has increased 7-fold in the last 15 years, the 4000 currently board-certified sleep medicine physicians remain inadequate to address the scope of the problem. In noting this dilemma, the IOM report called for a greater role for primary care doctors in screening and treating sleep disorders. It has become clear in recent years that a number of health problems, regularly treated by family physicians, are strongly impacted by sleep disorders, including cardiovascular disease, chronic pain syndromes, and mood disorders.

“The American Board of Family Medicine realizes the essential need for primary care physicians

in the field of sleep medicine,” noted James C. Puffer, MD (President and Chief Executive Officer of the ABFM). “ By offering certification in Sleep

Medicine, we hope to encourage the development of more family physicians interested in addressing this growing health epidemic.”