

ABPMR

# What Does It Mean When Your Physician is Board Certified?

Information for Patients

THE AMERICAN  
BOARD OF  
PHYSICAL  
MEDICINE AND  
REHABILITATION

[www.abpmr.org](http://www.abpmr.org)



# What is the Meaning and Value of Board Certification?

Patients can be assured that the goal of the ABPMR is to certify only physicians possessing the attitudes, specialized skills, knowledge and experience needed to diagnose and treat specific problems and to medically manage the long-term care of their patients' disabilities.

Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R), also referred to as physiatry, is a medical specialty concerned with diagnosis, evaluation and management of persons of all ages with physical and/or cognitive impairment and disability. This involves:

- ▶ diagnosis and treatment of patients with painful or functionally limiting conditions,
- ▶ management of comorbidities and co-impairments,
- ▶ diagnostic and therapeutic injection procedures,
- ▶ electrodiagnostic medicine, and
- ▶ an emphasis on prevention of complication of disability from secondary conditions.

Physiatrists are trained in rehabilitation of neurologic disorders, and in the diagnosis and management of impairments of the musculoskeletal (including sports and occupational aspects) and other organ systems, and the long-term management of patients with disabling conditions. Physiatrists provide leadership to multidisciplinary teams to enable individuals to achieve their maximum functional abilities.

Physiatrists are concerned with the maximal restoration and development of physical, psychosocial, cognitive and vocational functions in persons whose abilities have been limited by disease, trauma, congenital disorders or pain.

## Certification Requirements

- ▶ Education/Training
- ▶ Clinical Practice
- ▶ Examination

# How Does a Physician Obtain Board Certification?

*The successful completion of an exacting, multi-step process leads to certification by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.*

## Educational Requirements

- ▶ The physician must possess an MD or DO degree from an accredited school of medicine or osteopathy.
- ▶ The physician must have completed four years of graduate medical education (residency) in a training program accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The program includes one year of fundamental clinical skills training and at least three years in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

The content and quality of the training programs in physical medicine and rehabilitation are monitored closely by their Residency Review Committee of the ACGME. The ABPMR carefully follows the progress of individual residents throughout the training period.

## Examination Requirements

- ▶ The physician must pass a comprehensive, computer-based examination covering knowledge of the basic sciences and their interrelation with clinical sciences in physical medicine and rehabilitation.
- ▶ The physician must pass an in-depth oral examination in which candidates are expected to present evidence of their proficiency in the management of selected conditions that are seen within the clinical practice of physical medicine and rehabilitation.

For the oral exam, each candidate is examined individually by three experienced and knowledgeable experts in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation.

## How Does a Physician Obtain Board Certification continued...



### Practice Requirements

- ▶ The physician must have a current, valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States, Canada or Puerto Rico. Evidence of unrestricted licensure in all states where a license is held is required.
- ▶ The physician must have maintained a high standard of personal, professional and ethical conduct, with evidence of attention to patient safety and quality assurance within the practice of medicine.

### Maintenance of Certification<sup>®</sup>

The ABPMR began issuing time-limited certificates in 1993, valid for ten years. To maintain certification beyond the initial ten years, diplomates must participate in maintenance of certification. Maintenance of certification is an ongoing process through which a diplomate's credentials, licensure and professional standing are verified, and his or her knowledge and practice performance are evaluated. The maintenance of certification process is comprised of four components:

- ▶ Evidence of Professional Standing
- ▶ Evidence of Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Periodic Self-Assessment
- ▶ Evidence of Cognitive Expertise
- ▶ Evidence of Performance in Practice

### Physiatrist:

A physician who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation

# The American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

The American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR) was established in 1947, and is an independent, non-profit organization whose certificate(s) are recognized nationwide as signifying physicians providing quality patient care in the specialty. The ABPMR is one of the 24 certifying boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

The ABPMR comprises a distinguished Board of Directors who are nationally recognized leaders in clinical practice, academic medicine, medical education and research. The ABPMR establishes the requirements for certification, creates its examinations, strives to improve training, and contributes to setting the standards for physical medicine and rehabilitation and its subspecialties.

To qualified Diplomates, the ABPMR also offers certification in:

- ▶ Spinal Cord Injury Medicine
- ▶ Pain Medicine
- ▶ Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine
- ▶ Neuromuscular Medicine (commencing 2008)

Certification by the ABPMR promotes excellence in medical care. The Board believes that those physicians who successfully complete the required training and pass the board examinations have demonstrated their commitment to provide high quality patient care.

For more information on the ABPMR and certification in physical medicine and rehabilitation, please visit  
<http://www.abpmr.org>

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## The American Board of Medical Specialties

American Board of Allergy & Immunology

American Board of Anesthesiology

American Board of Colon & Rectal Surgery

American Board of Dermatology

American Board of Emergency Medicine

American Board of Family Medicine

American Board of Internal Medicine

American Board of Medical Genetics

American Board of Neurological Surgery

American Board of Nuclear Medicine

American Board of Obstetrics & Gynecology

American Board of Ophthalmology

American Board of Orthopedic Surgery

American Board of Otolaryngology

American Board of Pathology

American Board of Pediatrics

American Board of Physical  
Medicine and Rehabilitation

American Board of Plastic Surgery

American Board of Preventive Medicine

American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology

American Board of Radiology

American Board of Surgery

American Board of Thoracic Surgery

American Board of Urology