



# American Board of Addiction Medicine

4601 North Park Avenue • Upper Arcade, Suite 101 • Chevy Chase, MD 20815-4520

## Potential Paths for ABMS Recognition of the Specialty of Addiction Medicine

The American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM) is an independent medical specialty board, established in 2007. ABAM's mission is to promote the public welfare and contribute to the improvement of the quality of care in the medical specialty of Addiction Medicine by certifying physicians in Addiction Medicine. Fifteen physicians serve as ABAM Directors. Eight are Specialty Directors from the specialties of Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, OB-GYN, Pediatrics, Preventive Medicine, Psychiatry, and Surgery. Seven are At-Large Directors. ABAM's goal is to gain American Board of Medical Specialties' (ABMS) recognition for the specialty of Addiction Medicine, through collaboration with the ABMS and its member Boards.

The ABAM Directors have determined that the core knowledge, skills and scope of practice of Addiction Medicine represent a specialty that is best served by one of two pathways to ABMS board certification: 1. The creation of a new ABMS Conjoint Board (a body established under the joint sponsorship of not less than two ABMS Primary Boards); or, 2. An alternate pathway through an independent specialty board, the American Board of Addiction Medicine. For the alternate pathway, physicians would first complete the requirements for certification by one of the ABMS member Boards, and become certified by an ABMS member Board. Applicants for ABAM certification would then complete an ACGME-accredited Addiction Medicine residency and take the ABAM certification examination. ABAM diplomates would thus be "double-Boarded": in their initial specialty, and in Addiction Medicine.

ABAM offers a national certification examination developed in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners. The examination is written by the ABAM Examination Committee. Prior to the transfer of the examination to ABAM in 2009, the national certification examination was offered by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). ABAM has over 1700 physician Diplomates who became board certified in Addiction Medicine through an ABAM "grandfathering" process made available to physicians previously certified via examination by ASAM. The ABAM certification and re-certification examinations will be offered in December 2010.

Much work is required before ABAM will apply to the Liaison Committee on Specialty Boards. (The LCSB receives applications for approval of medical specialty boards and makes recommendations to the ABMS and the AMA.) The ABAM Directors approved the initial iteration of Addiction Medicine's Core Content, Core Competencies and Scope of Practice ([www.abam.net](http://www.abam.net)). The next step is to develop the residency Core Curriculum and assure that a sufficient number of programs are available to be accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Agreement must be reached with the ACGME on accreditation standards and on accrediting programs. ABAM's Committee on External Relations to Medical Societies and Boards has begun a dialogue with ABMS member Boards, specialty societies in the Council of Medical Specialty Societies, the AMA and others about ABAM's vision, and to request their support for an ABMS-recognized specialty of Addiction Medicine. (October 20, 2009)