



American Board of Addiction Medicine

Significance of ABAM Certification

What does it mean to be ABAM Certified:

Physicians certified by ABAM have the knowledge and skills to provide prevention, screening, intervention and treatment related to drug use disorders and addictions. These addictions can be to alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, including illicit drugs and prescription medications. In addition, these physicians can recognize and treat the psychological and physical complications of addiction. ABAM-certified physicians have taken a rigorous, six-hour examination to verify that they are competent to be Addiction Medicine physicians

What type of treatments do ABAM-certified physicians provide?

ABAM-certified physicians use the full range of evidence-based treatments available to treat addictions and drug use disorders. These can include behavioral therapy (such as individual or group counseling, cognitive therapy, or contingency management), medications, or their combination. The specific type of treatment or combination of treatments will vary depending on the patient's individual needs and, often, on the types of drugs they use. The severity of addiction and previous efforts to stop using drugs can also influence a treatment approach. Finally, people who are addicted to drugs often suffer from other health (including other mental health), occupational, legal, familial, and social problems that should be addressed concurrently. ABAM-certified Addiction Medicine physicians also work with other members of the health care team to ensure that patients' needs, and those of their families, are adequately met.

Reasons to become ABAM Certified:

The ABAM certificate is recognized throughout the world as signifying excellence in the practice of Addiction Medicine. It demonstrates that a doctor has met vigorous standards through intensive study, assessment, and evaluation. Certification is designed to assure the public that a medical specialist has successfully completed an approved educational program and an evaluation, including a secure examination designed to assess the knowledge, experience, and skills requisite to the provision of high quality patient care

- Treatment Centers, hospitals, and yes, even managed care organizations actively seek and recruit ABAM Certified Physicians to provide direction and leadership for their programs.
- ABAM Certification provides physicians with career opportunities, education, and access to experts in the field.
- An ABAM-certified physician is one who has shown mastery of the knowledge expected of a physician practicing in the field of alcoholism

and other drug dependencies. Certification is an evolutionary process, and periodic demonstration of the mastery of current knowledge is a critical element.

- Recognition by peers and CD staff as knowledgeable in addiction medicine.
- Many states such as New Jersey require their medical Directors to be Certified in Addiction Medicine.
- State Hospitals and Medical Facilities call on ABAM Certified Physicians for testimony and identifying legislation that affects substance abuse issues and treatment.
- Credibility with third party payers when advocating for patient treatment/length of stay.
- Since its inception in 1986, ABAM has certified more than 2,000 physicians in the specialty of Addiction Medicine.
- The importance of ABAM Certification is in direct proportion to the credibility of the Supporting Specialty Society, the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). How credible is ASAM, ASAM is represented in the AMA house of delegates, is recognized as a Specialty Code, and is a member of the Council of Medical Societies of American College of Physicians.
- No physician can be interested in the field of addiction medicine without being involved in most if not all of the purposes toward which ABAM is working. Joining the significant others who are dedicated to these endeavors offers the individual physician a platform, a team, and a sounding board, all of which are needed before one can synthesize and fully develop scientific concepts. For a physician interested in addiction, there is no other professional option that offers the same opportunities for growth and development.
- ABAM is constantly working to achieve specialty status for Addiction Medicine with the American Board of Medical Specialties.
- For those physicians interested in faculty appointments (either voluntary or full time) at a medical school, the demonstration of certification by an outside recognized agency will serve to enhance their applications.