



# ABAM NEWS

July 30  
2009  
ISSUE 1



**Who we are:** The American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM) is an independent medical specialty board established in 2007, with the assistance and encouragement of the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

## LATEST NEWS



## ABAM aims to assure quality, increase access to treatment.

### *American Board of Addiction Medicine to Address Significant, Unmet Need*

Although one in five Americans entering the health care system has a substance abuse problem, there has never been a medical specialty, drawn from all areas of medicine, dedicated to treating addiction. Now, patients have somewhere to turn for specialized medical care for substance use disorders related to alcohol, tobacco and other addicting drugs, including some prescription medications. The American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM), a new independent medical specialty board, has begun to certify addiction

► **Insurance coverage:** As of January 2010, Federal law requires that private health plans with coverage for substance use problems will provide it in the same way that they provide medical and surgical coverage. Higher co-pays, different deductibles, lower caps on annual costs and other forms of differential insurance coverage will no longer be allowed.

► **Our mission:** ABAM's mission is to certify physicians as having the knowledge to recognize and treat patients with an addictive disorder, or with a medical or psychiatric condition related to the use of alcohol, nicotine or other addictive drugs, including some prescription medications.

► **Our vision:** ABAM's vision is that all patients in need will have access to a physician trained and board certified in addiction medicine, and that prevention, screening, intervention and treatment will become routine aspects of medical care. We wish to have addiction medicine recognized as a medical specialty by the American Board of Medical Specialties.

► **Nora D Volkow:** "Given the proper training, tools, and resources, physicians can be the first line of defense against substance abuse and addiction . . ."



medicine physicians across a range of medical specialties. ABAM sets standards for physician education, assesses physicians' knowledge, and requires and tracks life-long continuing education.

"Physicians are often at a loss for what to do about substance use and addiction issues, and may even misdiagnose the problem," said Kevin B. Kunz, MD, President of the American Board of Addiction Medicine. "We hope to change this by creating a cadre of thousands of specialized physicians across medical specialties."

Studies show that fewer than one in five physicians consider themselves adequately prepared to diagnose alcoholism or other drug use disorders. Physician training is sorely lacking. Separate courses in Addiction Medicine are rarely taught in medical school, and there are no Addiction Medicine residencies among the 8,200 ACGME-accredited residency programs in the nation's hospitals.

"We want addiction prevention, screening, intervention and treatment to become routine aspects of medical care, available virtually any place health care is provided," Dr. Kunz said.

ABAM certification will be given to physicians in Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine, Surgery, Preventive Medicine, Psychiatry, Neurology and other medical specialties, in order to make specialized addiction care available across the health care system. These physicians will need to complete the necessary accredited training and demonstrate that they are knowledgeable and competent in treating addiction.

"The American Board of Addiction Medicine will provide assurance to the American public that Addiction Medicine physicians have the knowledge and skills to prevent, recognize and treat addiction," said Dr. Kunz. "ABAM-certified physicians will also be able to address common medical or psychiatric conditions related to the use of addictive substances."

Created in 2007, with the assistance and encouragement of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, ABAM offers a rigorous certifying examination that was developed by an expert panel and the National Board of Medical Examiners, as well as a maintenance of certification examination to ensure that ABAM-certified physicians maintain life-long competence in Addiction Medicine. ABAM has formed a governing body of 15 distinguished physicians from across a range of medical specialties, each of whom is certified by a member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

ABAM is in the process of seeking recognition from ABMS, and plans to certify physicians in multiple specialties. ABAM has also

► **The Examination and eligibility:** The Examination will be developed by the ABAM Examination Committee and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), and will be offered at approximately 300 nationally-distributed Prometric test centers. Applicants must be currently board certified in their primary specialty by an ABMS-member Board, or have completed an ACGME-accredited residency.

## ABAM recognizes Inaugural Diplomates in New Orleans

To date, nearly 2000 physicians have been recognized as Diplomates of the American Board of Addiction Medicine. Three hundred of those diplomats were recognized formally on May 2, 2009 at the ASAM Annual Medical Scientific Conference in New Orleans. Their certification is both a formal recognition of their dedication to patient care, and to their attainment of the highest level of expertise in our specialty.

The American Board of Addiction Medicine certifies addiction medicine physicians from several specialties, including emergency medicine, family medicine, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, preventive medicine, psychiatry and surgery. This is new and unique, since previously there was board certification only for psychiatrists. Now in any type of setting, such as a clinic or a hospital ward, there may be a board certified addiction medicine specialist there to help.

### ABAM announces computer exam

The ABAM Certification Examination is administered at approximately 300 nationally-distributed Prometric test centers and approximately 100 International test centers. The availability of these 300 test centers should enable you to take the ABAM Certification and Recertification Examination in a location close to your home or practice.



taken steps to create Addiction Medicine training programs affiliated with the nation's top medical schools, and will apply to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to accredit these programs.

The new medical specialty board is being launched at a time of increasing promise for addiction treatment. Recent discoveries have added to the preponderance of evidence that addiction is a chronic disease of the brain, with unique vulnerabilities and pathology, and a predictable course if not interrupted by effective treatment. An increasing number of medically based addiction treatments have become available, and more are on the horizon.

“Years of scientific research have proven drug addiction is a brain disease caused by biological, environmental and developmental factors—a disease which can have far reaching medical consequences. Given the proper training, tools, and resources, physicians can be the first line of defense against substance abuse and addiction--identifying drug use early, preventing its escalation to abuse and addiction, and referring patients in need to treatment,” said Nora D. Volkow, MD, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Congress recently passed legislation that ends insurance discrimination against those with addictions, requiring as of October 2009 that private insurance coverage of addiction treatment, when provided, is offered in the same way that all other medical and surgical coverage is provided.

“Now that this barrier has been eliminated, we want to make sure that evidence-based addiction treatment is available to all who need it,” said Dr. Kunz. For more information, please visit [www.abam.net](http://www.abam.net)

## Review Materials

The ABAM Certification and Maintenance of Certification Exams cover the broad body of knowledge of addiction medicine. Examinees can expect questions on any or all topics that an addiction physician in any specialty can reasonably be expected to know.

The following suggested review consists of materials which the examinee may find useful in preparing for the ABAM Certification. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study guide for this examination, nor is it intended to be a list of the best resources available. There may be other resources which prove to be more useful to the examinee. Please Note: ABAM can make no claim that persons who read any or all of the texts listed here will perform at a predictable level on the Certification/Recertification examination

## Calendar of Events

### Upcoming Examination Dates:

#### ABAM Certification Examination

December 11, 2010

December 9, 2012

#### ABAM Re-Certification Examination

December 11, 2010

December 9, 2012

### 2009

**October 31, 2009:** Early Deadline for Application

### 2010

**January 30** Standard Deadline for Application

**April 30** Late Deadline for Application

**September 1** Exam Permits Mailed

**September 30** Deadline to Register Test Center

**October 14-26** ASAM Review Course in ADM

**October 27-30** CSAM Review Course in ADM

**December 11** ABAM Examination

### 2011

**March 12** Exam Results Mailed

## Eligibility Criteria

Candidates seeking certification must meet the eligibility criteria specified by the American Board of Addiction Medicine. Candidates must complete all requirements, culminating in the successful completion of the cognitive examination. Each candidate must meet the eligibility requirements including the requisite pre-doctoral medical education, training requirements, licensure requirements, CME Requirements, Full Time Equivalency requirement, and the procedural requirements outlined in the application.

## The Certification Examination

The full day computer-based examination consists of five (5) sections, with 15 minutes of break time allotted for the optional tutorial, and 15 minutes of break time allotted for the entire examination (15 minutes total). Once any section of the exam has been ended or timed



## ASAM Addiction Medicine Review Course, October 14-16, 2010, Chicago

The At the ASAM Review Course you will receive sample questions, a syllabus, and lectures that review subjects including epidemiology, alcohol, opioids, cocaine, and other topics that you will see on the exam. The course will take place in Chicago, from October 14-16, 2010. Continuing Medical Education: 21 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup> (estimated). For more information call the ASAM Conference Department at 301-656-3920 website: [www.asam.org](http://www.asam.org)

## CSAM Addiction Medicine Review Course, October 27 - 30, 2010, Newport Beach, CA

The Review Course presents an overview of the core elements of addiction medicine, presented by top experts in the field. Participants receive a course syllabus with copies of all lecture handouts and a CD-ROM study guide and help prepare for the exam. CSAM offers a Certification Exam Preparation Track during the Review Course. During the conference plenary, participants in the Certification Exam Preparation Track will sit at designated tables with other exam takers and facilitators who will help identify the key material for the exam and answer questions. It also provides 6 additional CME hours devoted to test-taking strategies, sample questions, high-yield exam content, and tips on how to prepare for the exam. Continuing Medical Education: 30 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup> (estimated). For more information call CSAM at 415-764-4855

## Principles of Addiction Medicine 4th Edition

ASAM is pleased to announce publication of the Fourth Edition of its landmark textbook, Principles of Addiction Medicine. Principles provides a comprehensive overview of the diagnosis and treatment of addictive disorders, as well as the management of co-occurring medical and psychiatric conditions.

Top-the-line research is offering a wealth of new guidance on everything from risk factors to types of addiction. And now the highly anticipated new edition of a gold-standard reference deepens your understanding and offers new tools to aid your success. A team of world-renowned thought leaders brings you scientific, evidence-based facts and perspectives on abuse programs, pain and addiction, co-occurring addiction and psychiatric disorders, psychiatry, neuroscience and neurobiology, pharmacologic advances, screening, the brief intervention, laboratory testing, alcohol treatment, and more!

out, you are not permitted to return to that section. Each Exam Section will consist of 50 Multiple Choice Questions (60 minutes), followed by an optional break should you choose to take it. Examinees may take all, part or none of the scheduled optional breaks. The break time listed is the minimum of allocated for the entire test day. If the examinee completes a testing block early, the remaining testing time for that block is converted into break time and added to their available break time balance. As the tutorial/practice exam may be reviewed before exam day, some examinees skip the tutorial on exam-day. The allotted time for the optional tutorial on exam day is 15-minutes, and unused tutorial time also gets added to the break time pool for that examinee.

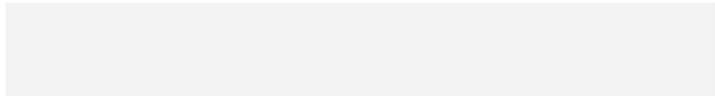
The passing threshold for ABAM examinations is set by a research study involving a large volunteer group of physicians represented from all medical specialties. Their work identifies the minimum passing score for each exam, by combining their estimates of the minimal knowledge level appropriate for ABAM certification with their estimates of the difficulty of the examination. The study and its outcome are reviewed by a committee of the ABAM Board of Directors. The passing score is not based on failing or passing a particular percentage of candidates, but rather on a score that demonstrates a consensus level of mastery of the vast field of Addiction Medicine.

Scores will be reported to candidates as soon as possible after the examination, typically three months after the last examination day.

## The ABAM Certified Physician

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.





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