



## **Policy on Required ABEM Continuing Certification for Pain Medicine**

### **BACKGROUND**

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) Pain Medicine (PAIN) continuing certification process is required for ABEM PAIN-certified physicians to maintain certification.

### **POLICY**

ABEM PAIN-certified physicians must renew their certification by participating in and meeting the following requirements.

#### **Professionalism and Professional Standing**

ABEM PAIN-certified physicians must continually comply with the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure and ABEM Code of Professionalism.

#### **Assessment of Knowledge, Judgement, and Skills (LA-PAIN Longitudinal Assessment Program or PAIN MOC Examination)**

ABEM PAIN-certified physicians will choose which exam requirement they would like to complete at the start of every new certification cycle (either the Longitudinal Assessment-Pain Medicine [LA-PAIN] program or the PAIN MOC Examination). If they choose the LA-PAIN program, they must participate in and receive a passing score for at least four years inside every five-year certification cycle. If a physician fails to meet the requirements of the LA-PAIN program, they will have the option to take and pass a PAIN MOC examination to meet the same requirement. Passing either the LA-PAIN program or the PAIN MOC Examination is required for continuing certification, but it does not singularly renew certification. Certification is renewed on January 1 after the expiration of the current certificate if all ABEM continuing certification requirements have been met. If the physician previously failed to meet the requirements of the LA-PAIN program and had to take and pass the PAIN MOC Examination to renew their certification, they will be automatically enrolled back into the LA-PAIN program at the start of their new five-year certification cycle.

#### **Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP)**

ABEM PAIN-certified clinically active physicians must attest to completing Improvement in Medical Practice (IMP) activities to maintain certification. Physicians are required to complete one IMP activity during every five-year certification cycle. IMP activities must follow the ABEM IMP Activity Guidelines, which are described below.

ABEM PAIN-certified physicians may report IMP activities they complete within their practice or complete any ABEM-approved, third-party PI module.

Physicians who inform ABEM that they are clinically inactive do not have IMP requirements. Clinically inactive physicians can change their clinical activity status by contacting the ABEM office. If they become clinically active again, physicians will have IMP requirements again.

### IMP Activity Guidelines

ABEM guidelines for completion of IMP activities require that the physician follow the following four steps:

- Review patient clinical care data from ten of the physician's patients. The data must be related to a single presentation, disease, or clinical care process that is part of *The Model of the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine* (EM Model) or the practice of Pain Medicine. Group data is acceptable if the individual physician's data is included. Measuring fewer than ten patients is acceptable if the activity is focused on a high-acuity, low-volume clinical issue.
- Compare the data to evidence-based guidelines. Physicians may use expert consensus or comparable peer data if such guidelines are unavailable.
- Develop and implement a practice improvement plan, an individual or group effort.
- Review patient clinical care data from ten additional patients with the same presentation, disease, or clinical process as the first patient data review. Group data can be used if the physician's patients are included, and measuring fewer than ten patients is acceptable if the activity is focused on a high-acuity, low-volume clinical issue. Use the new data to evaluate whether clinical performance has positively changed or if acceptable performance has been maintained.

### Reporting IMP Activities to ABEM

Physicians complete IMP activities by attesting to ABEM that they have completed the activities following the ABEM IMP Activity Guidelines described above.

When physicians attest to completing IMP activities, they are required to specify an independent verifier of their activities. The verifier must have oversight or knowledge of the physician's activity completion.

Five percent of reported IMP activities will be randomly selected for verification. ABEM will ask verifiers to affirm that all of ABEM's activity completion guidelines were met. Any activity that is not verifiable will not meet the requirement.

### **Annual Fee**

Physicians with certificates issued in 2021 and after are charged an annual fee. Payment of the fee is required to access continuing certification activities. Physicians who do not pay the annual fee by the end of the grace period will be decertified. Please refer to the ABEM Policy on Fees.

### **Renewal of Certification**

Physicians who have met all their ABEM requirements to renew certification will renew on January 1, immediately following the expiration of their previous certificate.

### **Nonrenewal of Certification**

Physicians who do not meet all their ABEM continuing certification requirements by their certification expiration date are no longer certified. ABEM provides options for formerly certified physicians to regain certification, as defined in the appropriate Policy on Regaining Certification. The options for regaining certification are based on the following:

- The number of required ABEM activities to renew certification a physician completed prior to certification expiration.
- Whether more than five years have elapsed since the physician's certification expired.

**APPEALS**

ABEM maintains an appeal process for ABEM-certified physicians and formerly certified physicians who do not fulfill the requirements described in this policy.

**EXCEPTION**

None