

ABIM Announces New Policies to Include Non-Internists in Board Governance

Written by Australian Business

(PRLEAP.COM) Philadelphia, PA, November 14, 2013 – The [American Board of Internal Medicine \(ABIM\)](#) today announced new policies to include non-internist and public members in ABIM governance. Broadening ABIM's governance to involve patients, caregivers and health care professionals who are not internists will position ABIM to better achieve its mission of enhancing the quality of health care by certifying doctors who demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for excellent patient care.

These membership changes follow the recent implementation in July of a new ABIM [governance structure](#)

. In September, the newly-formed

[ABIM Council](#)

voted that each ABIM Specialty Board – the entities charged with developing the standards for Certification and Maintenance of Certification in internal medicine and its specialties – will include at least two non-internist members, including both a member of the interprofessional health care team and a public member with a patient/caregiver perspective. Additionally, in an effort to ensure that Board governance represents the voice of the physician in practice, the Council also voted that each of the ABIM Specialty Boards will include a minimum of one practitioner whose primary practice is in a non-university, community setting. At its October meeting, the

[ABIM Board of Directors](#)

unanimously approved a governance initiative to seek for the first time at least two non-internist members for the Board of Directors.

"These historic governance changes recognize that although ABIM is of the medical profession, our primary responsibility is to the public, to our patients," said Dr. David H. Johnson, Chair of the ABIM Board of Directors. "ABIM's obligation is to ensure that our policies and programs are meaningful to both physicians and patients. Without the public voice, we don't have the full picture we need to meet that obligation and fulfill our mission."

The ABIM Board of Directors currently has 12 members and its role is to oversee the overall strategic direction of the organization and support efforts to make Maintenance of Certification and the certification credential relevant and valuable to the broader health care community and to all the internists who participate in it.

"As a physician who practiced in a community-based setting for nearly 30 years, I know that community-based physicians face different demands and expectations from those who work primarily in a university setting," said Dr. Richard J. Baron, President and CEO of ABIM. "For example, satisfying the Maintenance of Certification requirement for quality improvement activity might be easy if you're part of a large hospital or health system that is already engaged in such

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work. But for physicians in small practices, who may not even have an EHR, gathering performance data can be far more difficult. Although ABIM has been actively recruiting non-academic physicians for Board positions for years, requiring it now in the membership composition of the Specialty Boards signifies the importance of ensuring their voice will be represented in the design of Certification and Maintenance of Certification."

To better meet the needs of both our profession and the public, and to ensure that ABIM Certification continues to be the standard which defines the "trusted physician," the ABIM Specialty Boards' function has been expanded to define, enhance and oversee initial Certification and Maintenance of Certification.

"Being a good doctor is not just about medical knowledge," said Dr. Lee R. Berkowitz, Chair of the ABIM Council, which ensures the quality, relevance and effectiveness of ABIM's programs for Certification and Maintenance of Certification for all physicians across the specialties of internal medicine. "You could be up-to-date on all the latest medical advancements and still not deliver the level of care your patients deserve. That's why the charge of the ABIM Council and Specialty Boards is to define and assess the full scope of competency in each discipline, and that's why our governance must incorporate a variety of perspectives, including those of patients and health care professionals who are not internists."

ABIM will begin a search for the clinician and public Board members through a call for nominations process.

For media inquiries, contact Lorie Slass at 215-399-4005.

About ABIM For more than 75 years, certification by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) has stood for the highest standard in internal medicine and its 20 subspecialties and has meant that internists have demonstrated – to their peers and to the public – that they have the clinical judgment, skills and attitudes essential for the delivery of excellent patient care. ABIM is not a membership society, but a non-profit, independent evaluation organization. Our accountability is both to the profession of medicine and to the public. ABIM is a member of the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#)

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