

Now is the time to board certify

in **Hospice and Palliative Medicine**
before the grandfathering period ends.

Physicians have a unique but limited opportunity to gain board certification through the American Board of Medical Specialties and the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists without first completing a 12-month fellowship program.



American Academy of
Hospice and Palliative Medicine

ABHPM Diplomates—New Certification Is Required!

Those physicians certified between 1996 and 2006 by the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (ABHPM) who wish to continue to be certified after expiration of their ABHPM certificate will need to take the new certification examination offered by ABMS or AOA within the grandfathering period; the certification does not transfer to ABMS or AOA. This former certification, however, does help physicians meet eligibility criteria for the certification exams.

AAHPM and the Board Exam

AAHPM has no direct role or input into the development of the exams. The Academy follows the model for all board exams in medicine whereby the certification board is separate from the membership organization to preserve the integrity of the exam. AAHPM, as the membership organization, develops all test preparation courses and products without any “inside” knowledge about the exam questions. The Academy relies on the publicly published material about the exam (such as the content outline) to develop its products. AAHPM will also communicate updates regarding the certification exam as a service to its members.

Have you obtained board certification yet?

Are you aware of the requirements you must meet before sitting for the exam? AAHPM has put together a list of requirements and exam preparation resources to help physicians prepare for the exam.

Background

Following recognition of the specialty in 2006, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (the organizations that formally recognize allopathic and osteopathic specialties and confer subspecialty status in the United States) confirmed a 5-year period, identified as the “grandfathering period,” to help build the workforce by offering a direct pathway for physicians already working in the field with clinical competence to obtain subspecialty certification without having to complete a 12-month fellowship. During this grandfathering period, physicians who meet the required number of clinical hours and interdisciplinary team involvement may take the certification exam to become certified in hospice and palliative medicine.

Therefore, physicians who intend to take the 2012 ABMS exam need to begin their 2-year subspecialty-level practice no later than spring 2010.

ABMS approved the creation of hospice and palliative medicine as a subspecialty of 10 participating boards. These include the American Boards of Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Psychiatry and Neurology, Radiology, and Surgery. The certification examination is administered to candidates from all boards at the same time in the same testing centers. The American Board of Internal Medicine is responsible for administering the examination.

AOA approved the creation of hospice and palliative medicine as a subspecialty of four cosponsoring boards. These include the American Boards of Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Neurology and Psychiatry.

Examination Dates

The first three exams occur during the grandfathering period. For allopathic physicians taking the ABMS exam, the first exam was offered in 2008; the second exam will be administered November 16, 2010, and the third in Fall 2012. AOA will hold their examinations in alternating years for osteopathic physicians: Fall 2009, 2011, and 2013. Both organizations will offer an exam every other year thereafter (2014, 2016, etc., for ABMS), which will include an additional requirement for participation in a fellowship program in hospice and palliative medicine.

“Achieving board certification demonstrates that you are dedicated to the highest standards of knowledge and practice in hospice and palliative medicine. The grandfathering period is a limited opportunity for physicians who built this field from the ground up to define what ‘hospice and palliative medicine specialist’ means.”

—Dale Lupu, PhD, Executive Director, ABHPM



AAHPM's UNIPAC Self-Study program and HPM PASS

practice test were the predominant resources I used to prepare for the first osteopathic boards for hospice and palliative medicine. They were great resources and helped me pass the AOA exam.



—John F. Manfredonia, DO FACOFP FAAHPM, AAHPM Member

Certification Requirements

There are two pathways to obtaining certification in hospice and palliative medicine—the Practice Pathway for midcareer physicians and the Training Pathway for those who have completed a 12-month fellowship in hospice and palliative medicine. All physicians seeking eligibility for either pathway will need to fulfill the following:

- Hold a current certificate from one of the 10 cosponsoring ABMS or four AOA Boards at the time of application.
- Demonstrate clinical competence in the care of patients.
- Hold a valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States or Canada.
- Pass the certification exam in hospice and palliative medicine.

Practice Pathway for Midcareer Physicians

In addition to the above general requirements, physicians seeking certification through the practice pathway will need to complete either

- **Pathway A**, which requires at least 2 years and 800 hours of clinical involvement in subspecialty-level practice of hospice and palliative medicine during the 5 years prior to application, including
 - at least 100 hours of participation with a hospice or palliative care team
 - active care of at least 50 terminally ill patients (25 for pediatrics).
- **Pathway B**, which requires prior certification by the American Board of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (ABHPM) with an expiration date of December 31, 2008, or later

Training Pathway

Physicians seeking certification through the training pathway will need to complete a 12-month hospice and palliative medicine fellowship in addition to the above noted general requirements.

AAHPM strongly recommends physicians contact their primary boards for information regarding specific certification requirements.

How to Register

Physicians will register for the certification exam through the cosponsoring primary board by which they are certified (eg, Family Medicine Diplomates will register through the American Board of Family Medicine). Each board administers its own application process. Registration for upcoming exams will open in spring of the exam year, and AAHPM will update its Web site as specific dates become available.

Several resources are available on the AAHPM website at www.aahpm.org/certification or by calling AAHPM at 847.375.4712.

How to Prepare for the Board Exam in 4 Easy Steps

1. Become Familiar with Exam Content

ABIM and AOA have posted on their websites the hospice and palliative medicine certification exam blueprint, which includes the content areas covered, their relative percentages, and the approximate number of questions in each area to expect on a typical exam.

2. Take the ABIM Sample Tutorial

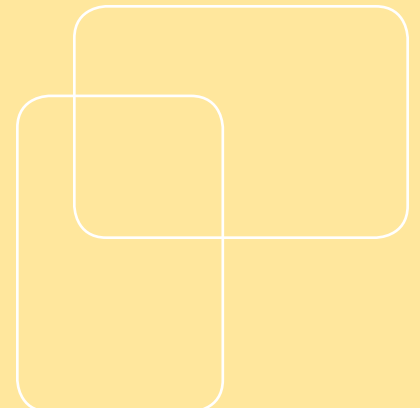
ABIM has provided a sample online tutorial so candidates can familiarize themselves with the look and feel of the computerized testing process.

3. Stay Current with the Rules and Logistics for Taking the Examination

Read carefully everything that you receive from your primary board concerning the instructions for registering for the exam.

4. Learn the Latest Information

AAHPM and other organizations offer a variety of materials and courses to help prepare for the exam. Several of the Academy's most popular resources are listed on the **reverse page**.



See next page for certification resources.

“The AAHPM Intensive Board Review Course was extremely valuable—outstanding presentations that covered the key areas for the boards. The combination of didactics, time for questions, and practice question sessions provided me with the foundation that I needed to direct my board studying.”

—Jean S. Kutner, MD MSPH
FAAHPM, Course Attendee

AAHPM Certification Resources

The **AAHPM Intensive Board Review Course** provides a thorough review of the current practice of palliative medicine, including clinical advancements and research updates, and helps prepare physicians and other healthcare providers to integrate palliative care into all health care and ensure that pain and symptom control, psychosocial distress, spiritual issues, and practical needs are addressed with patients and their families throughout the continuum of care. Content from the course is also available on DVD-ROM with synchronized audio and PowerPoint presentations.

The **Current Concepts Course CD-ROM** offers a thorough review of the current practice of palliative medicine, including clinical advancements and research updates. It includes content from the 2008 Course.

The **UNIPAC Self-Study Program: Hospice and Palliative Care Training for Physicians** consists of nine self-study books that are designed to orient the reader to the field. They are not sufficient by themselves to serve as comprehensive review for the exam but are an excellent resource, especially for practitioners new to the field.

Each issue of **PC-FACS** includes concise summaries of important findings collected from more than 50 medical and scientific journals.

HPM PASS contains 150 test questions to assess knowledge in key areas of hospice and palliative medicine and uncover areas where additional review may be helpful. Once the online practice test has been completed, access to the answers with rationale and references are provided for further study. Learn more at HPMpass.org.

HPM FAST e-learning modules focus on important clinical topics: Prognostication, Pediatrics, and Psychiatry and Cognition. Each online test contains 25 questions and includes explanations and up-to-date references to provide guidance for further study.

To purchase any of these resources, call AAHPM at 847.375.4712 or visit aahpm.org.

Other Certification Resources

AAHPM **Continuing Educational Curriculum** lists introductory and ongoing educational resources to assist physicians seeking comprehensive education in hospice and palliative medicine. Find this resource at www.aahpm.org/education/curriculum.html.

The **Education in Palliative and End-of-Life Care for Oncology (EPEC-O) CD-ROM** is a comprehensive curriculum in palliative and end-of-life care, developed specifically for clinicians caring for persons with cancer, and is available for order at www.cancer.gov/aboutnci/epeco. Other EPEC workshops and online learning tools are available at www.epec.net/EPEC/Webpages/index.cfm.

The Stanford University Faculty Development Center developed a 16-hour faculty development course, **Stanford End-of-Life Care Curriculum for Medical Teachers**, incorporating basic material designed to be used by physicians in any area of expertise. This Web-based course is an adaptation of materials developed for that course.

Fast Facts are free, one-page summaries for over 200 critical topics in hospice and palliative medicine. Peer-reviewed, evidence-based, and searchable by keywords, they are a good place to search when looking for resources on a specific topic. View Fast Facts at www.mcw.edu/EPERC/fastfactsindex.

Palliative Care JournalClub filters and organizes thousands of journal articles that are relevant to the field. Visit <http://journalclub.pallcare.info> for more information.

Pallimed, the hospice and palliative medicine blog, offers commentary on current news and recently published articles and books. Visit www.pallimed.org to learn more.