



**American Board
of Medical Specialties**
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American Board of Medical Specialties Statement on Commitment to Clinician Well-Being

As the leading not-for-profit organization overseeing physician certification in the United States, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is committed to improving the quality of health care for patients, families, and communities by ensuring that physician specialists have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide quality care in their declared medical specialty. ABMS is concerned about the increasing level of burnout, depression, and suicide among today's physicians and clinicians and is making a concentrated effort to work alongside other professional health care organizations to address this growing problem.

ABMS and its 24 Member Boards are working together to support their colleagues in medicine in advancing this cause through a variety of initiatives.

- The *ABMS MOC Directory* is an online repository of competency-based continuing certification activities. It aligns the Boards' continuing certification programs with educational initiatives designed to support the development of high functioning physicians, improve physician wellness, and reduce burn-out. More than 150 continuing certification activities in the following areas are indexed in the MOC Directory:
 - Organizational Culture of Wellness
 - Efficiencies of Medical Practice
 - Personal Resilience

[ABMS' recent call for physician well-being activities](#) for the MOC Directory continues its collaborative efforts with national thought leaders and organizations committed to improving physicians' well-being.

- Member Boards are changing their continuing certification programs to be more practice relevant, offer flexibility for meeting the standards, and make the process more convenient. Among the improvements are:
 - New testing approaches that are more customized to practice and more formative, to help physicians focus their learning and remain current with advances in their specialties;
 - Use of resources to simulate how physicians practice in real time;

- More convenient access to practice-relevant learning activities; and
 - Access to practice- and practice system-relevant improvement activities through the ABMS Multi-Specialty Portfolio Program.
- Individual Member Boards are addressing clinician well-being in a variety of ways. As an example:
 - The American Board of Family Medicine is conducting research on burnout among Family Physicians¹
 - The American Board of Anesthesiology is actively examining issues related to substance abuse among anesthesiology residents^{2,3} and practicing physicians (ongoing analyses).
 - The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology recently issued a [summary](#) report from its Crucial Issues Forum which explored factors contributing to physician wellness and burnout and what might be done to address these issues.

ABMS recognizes the importance of maintaining a high functioning, healthy physician workforce in order to meet the country's health care needs. ABMS remains committed to increasing its development and recognition of activities directed at improving the resilience of physicians throughout their careers. Recognizing that the continuing certification process is viewed as a contributor to physician burnout, ABMS is dedicated to making the continuing certification process more relevant and less burdensome.

Since 1933, the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#) has established the standards that its 24 Member Boards use to develop and implement educational and professional evaluation, assessment, and certification of physician specialists. More than 880,000 physicians are certified in one or more of the approved 39 specialties and 86 subspecialties offered by the [ABMS Member Boards](#).

¹ Puffer JC, Knight C, O'Neill TR, Rassolian R, Bazemore AW, Peterson LE, Baxley EG. Prevalence of Burnout in Board Certified Family Physicians. J Am Board Fam Med 2017;30:125–126.

² Warner, D. O., Berge, K., Sun, H., Harman, A., Hanson, A., & Schroeder, D. R. (2013). Substance Use Disorder Among Anesthesiology Residents, 1975-2009. JAMA 2013; 310(21): 2289-2296. DOI: 10.1001/jama.2013.281954.

³ Warner, D. O., Berge, K., Sun, H., Harman, A., Hanson, A., & Schroeder, D. R. Risk and Outcomes of Substance Use Disorder among Anesthesiology Residents - A Matched Cohort Analysis. Anesthesiology 2015;123(4): 929-936. doi:10.1097/ALN.0000000000000810