



Subspecialty Certification in Brain Injury Medicine



In September 2011, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) approved the application cosponsored by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPMR) and the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) to offer subspecialty certification in Brain Injury Medicine (BIM). “Leaders in BIM have been laying the groundwork for recognition for the last ten years,” said Dr Karen Kowalske, a director of the ABPMR and chair of the BIM Committee. In addition to the recognition of the subspecialty by the ABMS, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) will be working to establish the requirements for fellowship training in BIM.

“The new subspecialty was created because of the increased diagnosis and treatment options for patients with brain injuries and the growing need to monitor, assess, and advance new technologies for patients,” said Anthony M Tarvestad, JD, ABPMR Executive Director. “With this new certification, BIM specialists will lead the way in providing optimal, advanced, and cost-effective care for patients with brain injuries.”

“With increasing awareness of the prevalence and lasting effects of brain injury, it is expected that this new subspecialty will serve to advance the training and document the expertise of physicians who diagnose and treat patients with these potentially debilitating conditions,” said Larry R Faulkner, MD, ABPN President and CEO.

The subspecialty of BIM will focus on the prevention, evaluation, treatment, and rehabilitation of individuals with acquired brain injury. BIM physicians provide a high level of care for patients with brain injury and their families in both the hospital and the post-acute setting, and over the continuum of care to facilitate the process of recovery and improve medical and functional outcomes.

There is a growing need to train more physicians who can provide care for patients with brain injury. As a result of the recognition of BIM by both the accrediting and certifying organizations, BIM subspecialty training programs currently in place can become accredited, new BIM training programs can be developed, and patients will have the assurance that physicians who are board certified in BIM will have completed advanced training.

A joint committee comprised of representatives from the ABPMR and the ABPN convened the first meeting of the BIM Examination Committee to begin their work on preparing the content outline. The first BIM examination is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2014.

The ABPMR and the ABPN will use identical criteria for assessing an applicant’s qualifications for admission to the examination. All candidates for the BIM examination must satisfy the following:

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ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

All candidates for subspecialization in BIM must:

- Possess an appropriate medical degree or its equivalent
- Maintain certification by the ABPMR or by the ABPN in neurology, neurology with special qualification in child neurology, or psychiatry, or maintain subspecialty certification in Sports Medicine through any of the following ABMS boards: the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP), or the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM)
- Possess a current, valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine or osteopathy in a United States licensing jurisdiction or Puerto Rico, or a medical license in Canada
- Meet the ABPMR or ABPN medical licensure requirements
- Complete specified education and training in an accredited BIM program over a period of at least one year

TEMPORARY CRITERIA

Admissibility to the BIM examination can be fulfilled by satisfying the essential requirements and, for a period of five years from the date of implementation of the first examination, the education/training requirement may be satisfied by one of the following temporary criteria:

- Successful completion of one year of an ACGME-accredited fellowship in BIM after residency in the primary specialty
- Successful completion of 12 months of non-accredited BIM fellowship in a fellowship program affiliated with an ACGME-accredited PM&R, neurology, child neurology, or psychiatry residency training program
- Completion of a minimum of three years full-time practice experience (within the last five years), of which 25% of professional time is specifically devoted to BIM beyond completion of residency in the primary specialty. The practice should be adequately broad to reasonably reflect the full scope of BIM

CRITERIA

After the first five years following initiation of the examination in BIM, the candidate must:

- Maintain certification by the ABPMR or the ABPN in neurology, neurology with special qualification in child neurology, or psychiatry, or maintain subspecialty certification in Sports Medicine through ABIM, ABFM, ABP, or ABEM
- Have successfully completed one year of an ACGME-accredited fellowship in BIM after successful completion of residency in the primary specialty
- Be recommended by the fellowship program director for admissibility to take the subspecialty examination in BIM
- Possess a current, valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine or osteopathy in a United States licensing jurisdiction or Puerto Rico, or a medical license in Canada
- Meet the ABPMR or ABPN medical licensure requirements
- Candidates who applied under temporary criteria who fail the examination may reapply for the examination after the temporary criteria has expired. ▴

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