

Addiction Medicine Official ABMS Subspecialty Transition to Board Certification Under ABPM Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

In March 2016, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) announced the recognition of addiction medicine as a new subspecialty under the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM). ABPM administers the board exam for Addiction Medicine (ADM). Physicians who have a primary ABMS board (including current addiction medicine specialists with a primary ABMS board certification) may apply to take the exam to become or continue to be an addiction medicine specialist; however, this pathway will expire in 2021. Upon expiration of the practice-based pathway, a one-year fellowship will be required to become an addiction medicine specialist for those who hold a primary ABMS board certification.

1. If I received my certification from the American Board of Addiction Medicine (ABAM), do I need to recertify under the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM)?
 - a. If you wish to receive American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) addiction medicine certification status, you will have to become eligible to take the subspecialty exam in addiction medicine through the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM). ABAM diplomates who took the 2015 certification or re-certification exam will have a pathway through the ABPM that will not require sitting for the new ABPM exam. If you do not wish to hold ABMS certification, your ABAM certification will remain valid.
2. Does the ABPM sit under the ABMS umbrella?
 - a. Yes, ABPM sits within the governing structure of ABMS.
3. What are the eligibility criteria to sit for the ABPM subspecialty exam in addiction medicine?
 - a. Maintenance of a primary board certification and an active, valid and unrestricted U.S. medical license in good standing.
4. Does the Complementary Pathway allow for primary board certification without successfully completing an approved residency program?
 - a. No, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) has accredited the preventive medicine residency training programs that offer the Complementary Pathway.
5. Can I sign up for the ABPM subspecialty exam in addiction medicine before I get the results of my ABPM primary exam in preventive medicine?
 - a. No, confirmed passage of the ABPM preventive medicine board exam is required to become eligible to sit for the addiction medicine subspecialty board exam.
6. If I no longer have my primary board certification, can I sit for the ABPM subspecialty exam in addiction medicine without completing another residency?
 - a. No, the eligibility criteria to sit for the ABPM subspecialty exam in addiction medicine requires proof of primary board certification.

7. If I have my certification from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), can I take the ABPM addiction medicine subspecialty board exam?
 - a. No, while ABAM provided board-certification to both allopathic and osteopathic physicians, the ABMS certifying umbrella only bestows board-certification to allopathic-trained physicians. However, ASAM is working collaboratively with the American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine (AOAAM) to respond to the needs of osteopathic-trained addiction medicine physicians. In summary, osteopathic-trained addiction medicine physicians will have to remain in the AOA certification track as board certification for osteopathic and allopathic physicians is now separate and distinct, which has been the custom for the majority of physicians and specialties. There is an effort to bring both certifying bodies under one umbrella, but those discussions are ongoing.
8. If I pursue the Complementary Pathway in preventive medicine, does that mean I have to quit my current employment?
 - a. No, the Complementary Pathway is designed to allow physicians to continue their present employment if a Program Letter of Agreement (PLA) can be executed with an addiction medicine physicians' on-site supervisor so that workplace activities can be counted towards residency training requirements.
9. Do occupational medicine residency training programs offer the Complementary Pathway?
 - a. Yes, the Complementary Pathway was first offered by occupational medicine residency training programs.
10. Is an MPH required as part of the Complementary Pathway?
 - a. No, only five (5) core public health courses are required to complete the public health didactic requirements of the Complementary Pathway.