



American Board of Pain Medicine Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine

Bulletin of Information

CCPM

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American Board of Pain Medicine

The American Board of Pain Medicine (“**ABPM**”) was founded in 1991. ABPM is an Illinois not-for-profit corporation exempt from federal income tax pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(6). ABPM’s purpose is to act as a certifying board for healthcare professionals defined as physicians (i.e., Doctors of Medicine, Doctors of Osteopathy, or equivalents) in the area of pain research, diagnosis, and treatment. ABPM’s headquarters are located at 85 W. Algonquin Road, Suite 550; Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005. ABPM operates as an autonomous entity, independent of any other association, society or academy. This permits ABPM to maintain integrity concerning its policy making on matters related to its Certification in Pain Medicine Examination and its Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine program. ABPM administers a psychometrically developed and practice-related Certification in Pain Medicine examination to qualified applicants and a Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine program for its Diplomates. A qualified applicant who passes the American Board of Pain Medicine is recognized as an Additional information regarding ABPM, including its Mission, Goals and Objectives, and a list of current ABPM Diplomates is available at: www.abpm.org.

ABPM Board of Directors

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Definition of Pain Medicine

Pain Medicine is a specialized discipline within the field of medicine that focuses on the **prevention, evaluation, treatment** and **rehabilitation** of individuals experiencing pain. Pain may arise from a variety of causes, including acute conditions (such as postoperative pain or pain related to cancer) or chronic conditions where pain is the primary issue (e.g., neuropathic pain, migraines, or fibromyalgia). The specialty of Pain Medicine addresses all types of pain, from those arising as symptoms of an underlying condition to cases where pain itself is the primary disease.

Pain Medicine specialists take a **multidisciplinary approach** to pain management, tailoring treatments based on the unique needs of the patient. These specialists may act as the principal treating physician, collaborate with other healthcare providers, or serve as consultants in complex cases. The scope of Pain Medicine includes **pharmacological management, procedural interventions, rehabilitative services, and psychosocial interventions** aimed at addressing both the physiological and psychological aspects of pain.

The role of a Pain Medicine specialist has evolved to include the following key responsibilities:

- **Comprehensive Assessment:** Pain Medicine specialists use a **comprehensive evaluation** that incorporates a detailed patient history, review of medical records (including imaging, laboratory, and electrodiagnostic studies), and consideration of social, psychological, and environmental factors. This helps to understand the root cause and impact of the pain on the patient's life.
- **Holistic, Patient-Centered Care:** Modern pain management increasingly focuses on the **patient's experience of pain** within their **biopsychosocial** context. Treatment plans are personalized and may involve **pharmacologic, interventional, psychological, and rehabilitative** therapies to address both the physical and emotional components of pain.
- **Advancements in Treatment Modalities:** With ongoing research, **new treatments** and technologies have emerged to treat chronic and complex pain conditions more effectively. These include:
 - **Neuromodulation therapies** (such as spinal cord stimulation, peripheral nerve stimulation, and transcranial magnetic stimulation)
 - **Minimally invasive procedures** (such as radiofrequency ablation, nerve blocks, and regenerative medicine techniques like stem cell therapy and platelet-rich plasma injections) may consider also adding percutaneous fusion procedures, percutaneous lumbar decompression
- **Multidisciplinary Approach:** Pain Medicine specialists often lead or coordinate **multidisciplinary teams** that may include specialists from **physical therapy, psychiatry, rehabilitation, and occupational therapy**. They work closely with primary care physicians, rheumatologists, neurologists, oncologists, orthopedic surgeons, neurosurgeons and other specialists to develop coordinated, comprehensive treatment plans.
- **Emphasis on Functionality and Quality of Life:** Pain Medicine specialists are increasingly focused on improving the **functional outcomes** of patients rather than solely alleviating pain. This includes helping patients return to work, engage in recreational activities, and improve their overall quality of life.
- **Cultural Sensitivity and Individualized Treatment:** Treatment plans are tailored not only to the medical aspects of pain but also to the **cultural, psychological, and socioeconomic** contexts of each patient. This is particularly important for **pediatric and geriatric populations**, who may have unique needs in terms of both treatment options and communication strategies.
- **Emerging Areas of Research and Advocacy:** The field of Pain Medicine continues to grow, with increasing research into **chronic pain mechanisms, opioid alternatives, and the impact of mental health** on pain experiences. Specialists are also becoming more involved in **advocacy** for pain patients and **public policy** to address issues such as opioid use, health disparities, and access to pain care.

Role in the Healthcare System: Pain Medicine specialists may work in a variety of settings, including **pain clinics, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and palliative care teams**. Their objective is to provide quality care to patients suffering from pain, focusing on a **whole-person approach** to treatment.

Evaluation Techniques used in Pain Medicine specialists' practices may include:

- **History and Physical Examination:** Thorough assessment of the pain's onset, progression, and impact.
- **Diagnostic Work-up:** Review of MRI, CT, electrodiagnostic studies, and other diagnostic tests to understand underlying conditions.
- **Psychosocial Screening:** Evaluation of factors such as mental health status, stress, and coping mechanisms.
- **Functional Assessments:** Measuring how pain affects daily living, work, and recreational activities.

Pain Medicine is a dynamic field, constantly adapting to emerging treatments and research. The goal remains clear: to **reduce suffering** and help individuals lead fulfilling lives, despite the challenges posed by pain.

American Board of Pain Medicine Certification in Pain Medicine Program

Purpose of the Certification in Pain Medicine and Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine. Pain Medicine has emerged as a separate and distinguishable specialty that is characterized by a distinct body of knowledge and a well-defined scope of medical practice, based on an infrastructure of scientific research and education. Competence in the practice of Pain Medicine requires advanced education, training, experience, and knowledge in Pain Medicine.

ABPM certifies qualified physicians in Pain Medicine. The purpose of the ABPM Certification and Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine is to:

- Establish the knowledge domain of the practice of Pain Medicine for Certification in Pain Medicine;
- Assess the knowledge of Pain Medicine physicians in a psychometrically valid manner;
- Encourage professional growth in the practice of Pain Medicine;
- Formally recognize physicians who meet the Pain Medicine education, training, experience, ethics, and knowledge requirements established by ABPM, as Diplomates; and
- Serve the public by encouraging quality patient care in the practice of Pain Medicine.

Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine

At the conclusion of their existing Certification period, Diplomates will be transitioned into the Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine program. The duration of Continuing Certification will be for five (5) years, provided the Diplomate:

- Continuously pays the Annual CCPM Participation Fees.
- Attests annually to their qualifications.
- Completes the un-proctored online learning modules consisting of 10 questions per quarter (40 questions annually) within 30 minutes

Annual Attestation and Participation Fee:

All Diplomates with time-limited certification must attest annually that they continue to meet the qualifications required for certification by ABPM, including but not limited to maintaining 25 hours of pain-related CME, active participation in the field of pain medicine, and adherence to ethical and professional standards. Eligible Diplomates must not have engaged in conduct which, in the judgment of ABPM: (i) reflects unethical activity related to the practice of medicine; or (ii) casts significant doubt on the Diplomate's ability to practice Pain Medicine in the best interest of patients..

Diplomates unable to attest will be reviewed by the ABPM Board of Directors and are subject to disciplinary action.

The fees historically paid every ten years when applying for the ABPM's former Maintenance of Certification Exam are now broken down into smaller and more manageable **annual payments of only \$200** which are due by January 31 each year. Diplomates who fail to pay the Annual Participation Fee will not be recognized as participating in CCPM and will need to pay a \$500 reinstatement fee (plus all missed fees) or sit for the Certification Examination once their current certification expires in order to remain certified.

While Diplomates with a time-limited certification must attest and pay the annual fee, **they are not required to complete the quarterly learning modules until their current certification expires.** Upon payment of the first annual fee and completion of the first learning module in the first year required, the Diplomate will receive a new certificate with a "reverification date" 5 years in the future.

American Board of Pain Medicine Certification in Pain Medicine Program

Quarterly Learning Modules

Applicants who pay their Annual Participation Fee and complete their attestation are eligible to register for their learning modules at www.webassessor.com/abpm. It will be necessary for Diplomates who are new to the platform to create an account. Once an account is created, the learning module quiz can be scheduled. The questions can be answered at any point during the year, although each module must be completed all in one sitting. Quizzes for Quarters 1-3 will remain active into Quarter 4, and all quizzes for the given calendar year must be completed by December 31.

All time-limited Diplomates are required to complete all four learning modules in that year by December 31, however, Diplomates are encouraged to complete the modules each quarter, if possible.

- To complete the modules, Diplomates must log into a secure online portal to complete questions covering timely and clinically relevant topics in comprehensive pain medicine.
- The modules are un-proctored with no minimum score required.
- Diplomates will receive immediate feedback on their performance along with rationale for the correct answer(s).
- Questions answered incorrectly may appear again at a later date.
- Diplomates who hold certification valid 2026 – 2037 are not required to participate in the quarterly learning modules until the year following the expiration of their certification. At that time, those Diplomates must complete the learning modules annually to maintain their certification.

Confirmation of Examination Appointment. After a Diplomate schedules their quarterly learning module quiz, they will receive an email confirming the learning module quiz is available. This email confirmation will contain additional details and tips for completing the module. If an Applicant does not receive an email confirmation or has questions regarding the Applicant's Examination appointment, the Applicant must contact ABPM at info@abpm.org.

Certification

An Applicant who passes the Certification Examination and maintains their CCPM is subject to ABPM's policies and is granted a limited, non-exclusive, terminable, non-sublicensable, non-assignable certificate to indicate the Applicant is a "Diplomate of the American Board of Pain Medicine," and use the acronym "DABPM," while the a Diplomate remains certified.

Obligation to Report Information Changes

A condition of a Diplomate's Certification in Pain Medicine is that the Diplomate report to ABPM any change in the information included in the Diplomate's most recent Application. No later than 30 days after the Diplomate learns of a change, the Diplomate must report the change by email, with proof of delivery, to ABPM at: info@abpm.org. A Diplomate's failure to timely report a change is cause for discipline, including revocation of a Diplomate's Certification in Pain Medicine. In addition, a change which causes a Diplomate to no longer meet the Eligibility Criteria is cause for discipline, including revocation of the Diplomate's Certification in Pain Medicine.

ABPM Disciplinary Procedures

ABPM shall receive, investigate and respond to complaints regarding a Diplomate's Certification in Pain Medicine qualifications and conditions in accordance with ABPM's Disciplinary Procedures. A Diplomate's Certification in Pain Medicine is subject to ABPM's Disciplinary Procedures.

American Board of Pain Medicine Certification in Pain Medicine Program

Interpretation

If there is a conflict between the information in this Bulletin and any other information provided to a Diplomate, whether orally or in writing, the information in this Bulletin controls. ABPM is entitled to interpret this Bulletin as it deems necessary. ABPM's interpretation of this Bulletin controls.

Nondiscrimination Policy. ABPM prohibits and will not tolerate unlawful discrimination against any individual in its programs, activities, and employment on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, status as a protected veteran, status as an individual with a disability, or other applicable legally protected characteristics.

Contacting ABPM

ABPM may be contacted by mail, phone, and email at:

American Board of Pain Medicine

Attn: Carolyn Andersen

85 W. Algonquin Road, Suite 550

Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005

Phone: (847) 725-2273

Email: info@abpm.org

Appendix A - Definitions

In addition to any other terms defined in this Bulletin, the following terms have the following meanings when capitalized and their plain and ordinary meanings when not capitalized:

ABPM Board means the Board of Directors of ABPM.

Adverse Action means any measure taken by a governmental entity that affects a physician's license to practice medicine or a physician's authority to use controlled substances in clinical care or research. Adverse Actions include: (i) limiting the scope of a physician's license to practice, such as restrictions: (a) on the prescribing of specific drugs or classes of drugs, (b) on the performance of specific procedures, (c) on the examination of specific types of patients (e.g., age or gender), (d) on engaging in specific types of therapy, or (e) of practice to certain settings; (ii) imposing special provisions or obligations, such as requiring: (a) a practice monitor, (b) remedial training or education, (c) completion of an educational course in medical documentation, prescribing, ethics, or professional behavior (e.g., remediation for boundary violations or disruptive behavior), (d) a medical, psychological, substance abuse, or psychiatric evaluation, or (e) counseling of any kind; or (iii) disciplinary actions, such as: (a) probation, (b) suspension, (c) revocation, (d) denial, or (e) issuance of a letter of concern, guidance, censure, or reprimand, regardless of whether the action is or may be reportable to the National Practitioner Data Bank or any other officially-sanctioned or required registry.

CME means continuing medical education qualifying for AMA PRA Category 1 Credits.

Certification in Pain Medicine means the process used by ABPM to determine if a physician meets ABPM's education, training, experience, and knowledge requirements for a physician to be recognized by ABPM as a Diplomate (defined below).

Clinical Practice of Pain Medicine means the delivery of direct pain care to patients.

CME means continuing medical education qualifying for AMA PRA Category 1 Credit.

Continuing Certification in Pain Medicine or CCPM means the process used by ABPM to annually confirm its Diplomates continue to meet ABPM's requirements for a physician to be recognized by ABPM as a Diplomate.

Diplomate means a physician who: (i) meets the Eligibility Criteria; (ii) passes the Examination; and (iii) holds a current Certification in Pain Medicine issued by ABPM.

Unrestricted means a license to practice medicine or registration or an authorization to use controlled substances in the clinical care of patients or in research against which there is no Adverse Action, limitations or restrictions. Any action taken by a physician to avoid or in anticipation of an Adverse Action precludes a license or a controlled substances registration or authorization from being "Unrestricted" as defined in this Bulletin.