

What is ABEM and What Do They Do for Me?

Note: This is the first in a series of articles about ABEM and board certification. Next: The Steps to Certification.

What is ABEM?

The American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) was approved by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) in 1979 as the 23rd recognized medical specialty (there currently are 24 recognized Boards). ABEM's mission is to ensure the highest standards in the specialty of emergency medicine (EM). It certifies emergency physicians who meet its educational, professional standing, and examination standards; that is, have graduated from an ACGME-accredited, EM residency program; have all medical licenses in good standing; and successfully completed an evaluation process that assesses the knowledge and skills required to provide quality patient care.

To date, there are 36,166 ABEM-certified physicians, 91 percent of whom are residency trained. Approximately six percent are ABEM-subspecialty certified in fields such as EMS or Medical Toxicology. At 76 percent of the total, community practice physicians represent the largest cohort of ABEM-certified physicians; 57 percent of all ABEM physicians participate in some form of teaching (i.e., residents, medical students). ABEM's board of directors is comprised of 19 clinically active emergency physicians, both academic and community-based.

Value of Certification

ABEM certification is voluntary and unlike organizations such as AAEM, ABEM is not a membership association. While ABEM works to support physicians, its focus is the public as well as the physician. The intent of ABEM certification is to help provide assurance to the public that a

physician specialist will provide the safest and highest-quality emergency care. Certification is a concrete way to demonstrate to patients, hospital administrators, peers, and the public that physicians have a strong knowledge base and have achieved a high level of skill in clinical practice. In this way, certification provides recognition as a specialist and can be a source of professional pride.

The value of certification is reflected in the higher compensation of ABEM-certified physicians. The 2015 Stern-ACEP survey shows that the total average compensation for an ABEM-certified emergency physician is nearly \$7,000 more than that of a non-certified emergency physician.

ABEM-certified physicians have the opportunity to choose from 14 subspecialties in which to specialize. The most recently approved is Neurocritical Care, which is the fourth critical care subspecialty in which ABEM-certified physicians can become subspecialty certified. The option of subspecialty certification expands practice opportunities for emergency physicians. Also recently approved is a focused practice designation in Advanced EM Ultrasonography.

ABEM also works on behalf of certified physicians to tell stakeholders about the value of being ABEM certified and what certification means for hospitals and their patients. ABEM is collaborating with AAEM, AAEM's Resident AND Student Association, and each of the national Emergency Medicine organizations to oppose unnecessary merit badges (e.g., ACLS, procedural sedation) that is superseded by your residency training and board certification. ●



ABEM-Certified Physicians

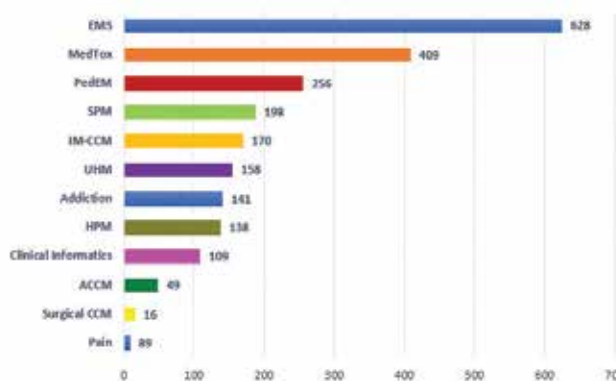
36,116 Diplomates

91% Residency Trained



9% Practice Pathway

ABEM Subspecialists*



* Includes ABEM physicians certified by other ABMS Member Boards. Data as of September 2018.