



## Spotlight On

David C. Henderson, MD, Boston, MA

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**Dr. Henderson** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine and Psychiatrist-in-Chief at the Boston Medical Center in Boston, MA.

### **Why did you want to join the ABPN Board?**

It has been an honor to become a board member of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. I was excited to be nominated for consideration to be a Director and was thrilled to be selected.

The mission that ABPN has, which is to promote and assess the competence of psychiatrists and neurologists to provide high quality patient care in an equitable and inclusive manner to diverse populations, is consistent with my focus in my career both locally and globally. The ABPN is a prestigious organization and plays a vital role in the education and the competencies of psychiatrists and neurologists in the United States.

This opportunity allows me to not only learn a great deal in participating in the Board, but to also have the opportunity to bring my own perspectives in assessing competencies for psychiatrists and neurologists based on my global and local experiences, as well as working with different patient backgrounds, cultures, and communities.

### **What do you want to achieve with the ABPN Board?**

My goal as a Board member at ABPN is to first learn as much about the process, and then contribute as best as I can. The ABPN not only assesses competence of psychiatrists and neurologists, but also plays an important role in the professionalism of psychiatrists and neurologists through many activities, including interactions with other professional organizations. I would like to have every psychiatrist and neurologist understand the importance of board certification, and to continue to ensure that opportunities to become board certified are fair and unbiased.

### **What is the most important thing people should understand about the Board?**

I think it is important to recognize that the Board works extremely hard to refine the methods of assessing competency as well as responding to feedback on its examinations and pathways for



recertification. The Board is made up of a group of outstanding physicians who have dedicated their careers to medical education.

**Why is the patient's perspective important to you and how does that connect to your work on the Board?**

The patient's perspective is so important in what we do with our clinical care, education programs, and research. While I spent my career doing quantitative research, during this last decade, I have become a champion of qualitative research. I think there is so much that we can learn from our patients and making the effort to understand their perspective is absolutely critical as we think about how we can best help them. Bringing the patient's perspective to the Board is critical and it should influence writing questions for exams, types of articles chosen in the ABCC, collaborations with other organizations, and the types of proposals accepted for funding.

**Did you have a mentor that affected your career journey?**

I have been very fortunate to have many mentors over the course of my career and at every stage of my career. Dr. Donald Goff, Vice Chair of Research at NYU, was my mentor in my work in schizophrenia clinical research and education. He was instrumental in the development of my research career in clinical trials, teaching and mentoring others, and we collaborated on dozens of publications. In addition, Dr. Chester M. Pierce, former Emeritus Professor at Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Education, and Harvard School of Public Health, was instrumental in helping guide my career, exposing me to opportunities, and providing guidance for my overall life, including family and careers. Dr. Pierce was essential in the development of my global career. He allowed me to dream beyond my expectations and explore new areas to gain knowledge that could help others. I can think of many one-sentence comments that resulted in a change or refocus of direction and were critical to my success and advancement.

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