



Spotlight On

Daniel J. Bonthius, MD, PhD, Charlotte, NC

Dr. Bonthius is Division Chief, Division of Child Neurology at Atrium Health Levine Children's Hospital, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Does serving on an ABPN Committee make you a better neurologist?

Yes! Serving on the committee prompts me to keep learning. I'm amazed by the fact that, even though I have been studying and practicing child neurology for many years, there are some important facts that I just don't know or never learned. Serving on the committee exposes me to information that I probably should have learned a long time ago but never did. In addition, our field keeps changing, as new knowledge is generated through research. Serving on the committee exposes me to this new knowledge a lot sooner than I would have learned it otherwise.



What do you hope to accomplish while serving on the ABPN committee?

My goal while serving on the Clinical Child Neurology Certification Committee is to generate high quality questions and answers that fairly and accurately examine a candidate's knowledge of child neurology. It's a lot harder to do than it sounds. Choosing the proper content to test is challenging and sometimes controversial. Then, when you finally have the proper content, getting the right wording of the questions is often a whole additional struggle.

What should people know about the ABPN Clinical Child Neurology Certification Committee?

A critical thing to know about this committee is that every member has the best interest of the candidate strongly in mind. This committee wants every qualified candidate to pass the examination. For that reason, they work hard to make sure that every question is clearly written and that the content is not beyond what a practicing neurologist should reasonably know. A lot of pretty good questions get eliminated or reworked because they are not quite up to the high standards of the committee.

Why is the patient perspective important to you and how does that connect to your work on the committee?

I highly value the patient's perspective and well-being. Patients need to know that their physician is competent, knowledgeable, and ethical. Our work on the committee attempts to guarantee that certification from the ABPN means that a physician possesses those qualities. It's for that reason that the questions include aspects of basic knowledge, clinical practice, and ethics.

Did you have a mentor that affected your career journey?

I sure did. In fact, I had several excellent mentors, and I feel their guidance every day. I find myself using the same phraseology, mannerisms, and approaches that they used. One mentor who particularly stands out is Dr. Harold Adams, an adult stroke neurologist. Anyone associated with the ABPN knows him, as he was previously a board member and had an unforgettable character. He radiated a love of neurology and was excited by every patient he met or heard about. He also had a great demeanor as a leader and exuded confidence, good judgment, and a sense of humor. As a Division Chief, I am frequently confronted with dilemmas and issues. I find myself asking ‘How would Harold Adams handle this?’ and I act accordingly.

Return to the [Spotlight On web page](#).