



**American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.**

A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)

# Continuing Certification (CC) Program

**NOTE: All policies, components, and requirements of the ABPN Continuing Certification (CC) Program are subject to change. Each ABPN Diplomate is responsible for remaining informed about the current CC program requirements. Diplomates are encouraged to consult the ABPN website at [www.abpn.org](http://www.abpn.org) for regular updates.**

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# A. The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) Continuing Certification (CC) Program

## 1. Introduction

The Continuing Certification Program (CC) of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology reflects the Board's commitment to lifelong learning throughout one's profession. The purpose of Continuing Certification (CC), formerly known as Maintenance of Certification (MOC), is to ensure that diplomates adhere to the highest standards in medicine and pursue excellence in all areas of care and practice improvement.

The CC program requires diplomates to participate in sanctioned self-assessment performance measures, identify possible weaknesses in their knowledge, pursue learning activities tailored to individual areas that need to be strengthened, and develop quality improvement programs based on their clinical practice. The goal for diplomates is to reflect on their personal knowledge and performance, commit to a process of improvement and reevaluation over specified time frames, and continually improve care for their patients.

The ABPN has developed a program for our diplomates that strikes a balance between what will likely be required by organizations that license, credential, and pay physicians, and what is reasonable and straightforward enough to be accomplished by busy physicians. **Many of our diplomates are already participating in various components of Continuing Certification through institutional quality improvement programs. The CC program endeavors to recognize those efforts.** ABPN has worked to develop a clear CC program that will enable diplomates to demonstrate their competence throughout a certificate cycle.

The ABPN is committed to supporting its diplomates throughout their careers by advancing the clinical practices of psychiatry and neurology and by promoting the highest evidence-based guidelines and standards.

## 2. History of Recertification and Continuing Certification

Before October 1, 1994, physicians certified in psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, neurology, or neurology with special qualification in child neurology were granted lifetime, now known as Non-Time Limited, certificates.

Between October 1, 1994, and December 31, 2011, all individuals achieving specialty Board certification by the ABPN were issued time-limited certificates that expired December 31, ten years after they were issued. Certificates issued in all subspecialties except child and adolescent psychiatry have always been time limited. Time-limited certificates for child and adolescent psychiatry began in 1995. Beginning January 1, 2012, all certifications are dependent upon continuous maintenance of certification based on a three-year cycle of requirements with certificates being valid as long as they are maintained. The examination cycle remains at ten years.

Due to a mandate of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the recertification program transitioned to the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program in 2007. Before 2007, diplomates recertified by taking the recertification examination. Beginning in 2007, admission to the recertification examination required prerequisites, MOC requirements. The change from recertification to MOC strengthened the program and guaranteed that physicians were current in ways not immediately available for testing. The ABPN transitioned to Continuing Certification in 2012. All ABPN certificates issued in 2012 and after do not have an end date since ongoing certification is contingent upon a diplomate meeting all ABPN requirements of the Continuing Certification Program. As such, CC Program certificates are no longer issued, unless a certificate has expired.

Effective July 2019, diplomates currently certified in a multidisciplinary subspecialty administered by a member board **other than** the ABPN (pain medicine or sleep medicine) now have the **option** of following the lead of that member board regarding their primary continuing certification requirement. See page 2 for more information.

### 3. Certifications

The Continuing Certification (CC) Program applies to diplomates who have passed a certification exam in 2012 or later. As of 2012, diplomates are automatically enrolled in the CC program upon passing an exam or article-based pathway.

Diplomates' certification and continuing certification statuses are public information. This information is reported by the ABPN to the public in the ABPN verifyCERT® system and annually to the ABMS.

Time-limited primary specialty certificates (psychiatry, neurology, and neurology with special qualification in child neurology) and all subspecialty certificates must be maintained in order to remain valid. Certificates that are not maintained are no longer valid and the physician is no longer certified in that specialty and/or subspecialty. If a primary specialty certification lapses, then the dependent subspecialty certifications will lapse as well. There is no time limit for regaining certification through CC.

Effective July 2019, ABPN diplomates currently certified in a multidisciplinary subspecialty administered by a member board **other than** the ABPN (pain medicine or sleep medicine) now have the **option** of following the lead of that member board regarding their primary continuing certification requirement. Under this policy, requirements for diplomates who hold ABPN-administered subspecialties will not change. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is the only ABPN-administered subspecialty which does not require maintenance of primary certification. Please refer to the requirements tables below.

#### Primary Certification Requirements for Subspecialties

Subspecialty	Administrative Board	Must Maintain Primary Certification?
Brain Injury	ABPMR	Yes
Pain Medicine	ABA	No
Sleep Medicine	ABIM	No

ABPN Subspecialty	Administrative Board	Must Maintain Primary Certification?
Addiction Psychiatry	ABPN	Yes
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	ABPN	No
Clinical Neurophysiology	ABPN	Yes
Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry	ABPN	Yes
Epilepsy	ABPN	Yes
Forensic Psychiatry	ABPN	Yes
Geriatric Psychiatry	ABPN	Yes
Neurocritical Care	ABPN	Yes
Neurodevelopmental Disabilities	ABPN	Yes
Neuromuscular Medicine	ABPN	Yes
Vascular Neurology	ABPN	Yes

Continuing Certification program participation includes meeting **all CC** requirements, [Professional Standing, Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits, Self-Assessment CME (SA CME) credits, Patient Safety Activity (if required), and a Performance in Practice (PIP) Activity], as well as passing the CC examination every 10 years or participating in the Article-Based Continuing Certification (ABCC) Pathway. **Inactive diplomates must complete the requirements prior to applying for recertification.** Any CME, SA, and/or PIP activities completed will apply to all specialties and/or subspecialties in which a physician is certified. Combined assessment formats for the traditional CC examination are available for physicians who wish to maintain certification in more than one area at the same time.

The assessment component of the CC program is the CC examination or participation in the ABCC Pathway. A passing score on the CC examination or successful completion of the article pathway automatically enrolls the diplomate into the Continuing Certification (CC) Program. Once enrolled in Continuing Certification, diplomates will need to satisfy all CC activity requirements and pay the annual fee on a 3-year block basis. If a diplomate chooses the article pathway for their certification(s), they will also need to successfully complete the article exams every 3-year CC block. Deadlines are posted in the ABPN Physician Portal Accounts.

## B. Continuing Certification Program Requirements

Beginning in 2012, diplomates who certify or recertify are enrolled in the Continuing Certification (CC) Program.

Certificates issued in the program do not have an end date as continuing certification is contingent upon meeting all requirements of the program.

General Requirements for continuing certification:

- Maintain an active, full, unrestricted medical license.
- Complete and attest to the following CC activities for each 3-year block/cycle in the Physician Portal account 'Activity Attestation' section:
  - 90 Category 1 CME credits (includes SA CME)
  - 16 Self-Assessment (SA CME) credits
  - One Performance in Practice (PIP) activity\*
  - One Patient Safety Activity (See your Physician Portal account to learn if this one-time requirement applies to you)
- Pay the [Annual Fee](#).
- Pass a CC exam for each certification every 10 years or successfully participate in the Article-Based Pathway each 3-year cycle.

The activities can be in either one's general specialty and/or subspecialty(ies). CME credits can derive from any Category 1 CME credits relevant to one's field of practice (they do not need to be ABPN-approved). The Self-Assessment CME (SA CME), PIP, and Patient Safety activities must be ABPN-approved.

Continuing Certification (CC) activity credit (CME, Self-Assessment CME, PIP, and ABCC article exams) must be obtained within the designated time frame of a diplomate's current three-year CC cycle. Excess credit during the current three-year cycle, or completed prior to this period, cannot be applied toward future CC Program requirements.

See pages 11-12 for information on Alternative CC Activity Options such as CC Activity Waiver for Fellowships, ABMS Portfolio Program, and Reciprocal CC credit.

### American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology Continuing Certification



\*Must be a full, active, unrestricted US state/territory or Canadian medical license

\* Successful completion of ABCC every three-year CC cycle meets the Self-Assessment-CME requirement

\* One-time Patient Safety activity required for first Continuing Certification block only

\* All ABPN-administered subspecialty certifications, except for Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, require maintaining primary specialty certification

## C. Continuing Certification Activities & Assessment Requirements

As mandated by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the Board has developed a Continuing Certification (CC) program that includes

1. Professionalism and Professional Standing
2. Lifelong Learning (CME), Self-Assessment (SA) CME, and Patient Safety
3. Assessment of Knowledge, Judgment, and Skills
4. Performance in Practice (PIP)

Continuing Certification (CC) program participation includes meeting all components of the CC program. Diplomates are only required to complete one set of CC activity requirements (CME, SA CME, and PIP activities) for all specialties/subspecialties in which a physician is certified.

### 1. Professionalism and Professional Standing

Professionalism forms the basis of medicine's contract with society. The ABPN is concerned with those aspects of professionalism that are demonstrated through a physician's clinical competence, commitment to lifelong learning and professional improvement, interpersonal skills, and ethical understanding and behavior. In its credentialing, certification, and CC programs, the ABPN seeks to assess and document that its candidates and diplomates possess and maintain these aspects of professionalism.

To show evidence of professional standing, all diplomates must continuously hold an active, full, and unrestricted allopathic and/or osteopathic license to practice medicine in at least one state, commonwealth, territory, or possession of the United States or province of Canada. All licenses held by a physician must be unrestricted. An active, full, unrestricted license must be maintained even if the physician is out of the country for extended periods of time.

If a diplomate does not have an active, full, unrestricted medical license on file, then their certification will change to 'Not Certified'.

Full details of licensure requirements can be found in the [ABPN Policies](#) section on the ABPN website. Licenses must be kept up-to-date in the ABPN Physician Portal.

### 2. Lifelong Learning (CME) and Self-Assessment (SA CME)

#### A. Continuing Medical Education (CME)

- Complete 90 specialty and/or subspecialty CME credits for each 3-year CC block/cycle.
- CME can be ANY Category 1 credits relevant to one's field of practice.
- Diplomates choose their own CME activities. CME activities do not need to be ABPN-approved.
- Self-Assessment (SA CME) credits contribute to the overall number of CME credits.
- CME activities completed for one specialty/subspecialty will satisfy the requirement for another specialty/subspecialty.

Acceptable CME credits are Category 1 CME accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), Category 1A CME accredited by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), or Category 1 CME accredited by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

#### B. Self-Assessment (SA) CME

Diplomates of the ABPN are required to participate in ABPN-approved Self-Assessment CME activities relevant to either their specialty and/or subspecialty. Self-Assessment CME activities are a specific type of CME activity that assist physicians in recognizing their current knowledge base in order to identify specific topics for gaining further knowledge.

- Complete 16 Self-Assessment CME credits for each 3-year block.
- Self-Assessment activities must be selected from the ABPN Approved CC Activities List since not all Category 1 CME activities meet specific Self-Assessment activity requirements.
- Choose from the following to complete Self-Assessment activities:
  - Select activities from the ABPN Approved CC Activities List. Some no-cost or reduced cost ABPN-approved activities on the list are available to members through their professional society.
  - Complete Self-Assessment (Part II) activities under the auspices of an International Certification Organization (e.g. RCPS-C) that meets the ABPN CC requirements; submit for preapproval.

### **Non-CME Self-Assessment Options for CC Exam Pathway**

- Diplomates in CC must complete the approved non-CME SA activity during the 3-year block for which they are earning non-CME Self-Assessment credit.

**ABPN is not a CME provider. While non-CME Self-Assessment waiver options on the lists below contribute to the Self-Assessment requirement of the ABPN CC Program, they are NOT recognized by state medical licensing boards as Category 1 CME credits.**

### **Applicable Non-CME Self-Assessment Activities**

#### **Successful completion of ABCC Pathway**

- Diplomates who successfully complete the article-based pathway will meet the required 16 Self-Assessment (SA CME) credits for the current block they are in.
- Diplomates who successfully complete the ABCC Pathway article assessments cannot use other non-CME self-assessment activities for CME credits in the current 3-year CC block.

### **Examination Pathway**

Eight Self-Assessment CME credits (not applicable for active ABCC participants) will be waived for EACH of the following activity options. These options require no preapproval by the ABPN:

- Passing an ABPN certification or CC examination within the current CC block;
- Peer-reviewed journal article that has the status of 'Indexed for MEDLINE' on the MEDLINE database. See psychiatry and neurology article examples on the website;
- Participate in an approved registry such as the PsychPRO Registry from the American Psychiatric Association. AAN [announced the Axon Registry closed](#), effective June 1, 2024. ABPN will accept Axon Registry participation during 2024 as credit toward the Continuing Certification (CC) program PIP requirement for any CC blocks ending in 2024.

These options must be submitted to the ABPN at [questions@abpn.org](mailto:questions@abpn.org) for preapproval:

- Approved scientific grant application (funding not required), with documented peer review/feedback, formal approval letter and/or priority score statement (i.e. Summary Statement with priority score from NIH, etc.), and significant/major contribution to the grant writing. Fellowship Awards do not qualify for scientific grant credit;
- Four hours of supervision from a supervisor or peer with written feedback about the diplomate's clinical performance, medical knowledge, and patient care;
  - Supervision activity similar to faculty to resident peer supervision
  - Involves diplomates presenting clinical cases to peer(s) and receiving detailed feedback on the care provided to specific patients
  - Must be documented and signed by the supervisor
- Formal institutional peer review committee with written feedback about the diplomate's clinical performance, medical knowledge, and patient care;
  - Reviews the clinical care a diplomate provides patients and gives written feedback
  - Keyed to review a specific medical condition or patient type
  - Typically, a chart review/QI process of diplomate clinical performance by a formal review committee at an institution.

*Note: Item writing and teaching/supervision do not count as approved non-CME SA activities.*

### **Diplomates are required to use only ABPN-approved Self-Assessment Activities.**

The ABPN will approve additional activities over time and reserves the right to approve or reject any course or guideline submitted for approval.

### **C. Patient Safety Activity**

The ABPN patient safety activity requirement applies to diplomates whose first block of CC activities began in 2017 or later. Those diplomates are required to do or have done a patient safety activity within three years prior or three years after entering the CC Program. Diplomates of the ABPN are required to participate in an ABPN-approved patient safety activity to ensure they have adequate knowledge of safety science and principles.

For example:

- A diplomate who is initially certifying or recertifying can complete the patient safety activity within the three years prior to recertifying OR during their first CC block.

Choose from ONE of the following options to complete the patient safety activity:

- A patient safety activity required by an accredited institution (e.g., hospitals, clinics, training programs) or
- A patient safety activity listed on the ABPN Approved CC Activities List. Some no-cost or reduced cost ABPN-approved activities on the list are available to members through professional organizations or
- A patient safety activity required for state medical licensure

#### General Information

- The patient safety activity is a one-time requirement.
- Diplomates will need to attest to a patient safety activity in their ABPN Physician Portal in the *Continuing Certification Activity Requirements* section.
- Institutions are NOT required to get preapproval from ABPN for patient safety activities.
- The candidate/diplomate must provide documentation of successful completion of the patient safety activity if audited.
- See your individual ABPN Physician Portal for more information.

### 3. Assessment of Knowledge, Judgment, and Skills

To satisfy the Assessment of Knowledge, Judgement, and Skills component, diplomates must recertify for each certification they hold, in addition to satisfying the CC activity requirements. Diplomates must either pass the computer-based traditional CC examination once every ten years OR, beginning in 2022, opt to participate in the Article-Based Continuing Certification (ABCC) Pathway. Diplomates can choose their assessment pathway per certificate.

#### A. 10-Year CC Examination

The ten-year traditional CC examination is a practice relevant, clinically oriented, multiple-choice, computer-administered examination. Review the [Test Development, Scoring and Reporting Processes](#) webpage for an overview of the CC examination process.

Primary specialty CC examinations (psychiatry, neurology, and child neurology) are offered twice a year. Subspecialty CC examinations are offered once a year except for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, which is offered twice a year. American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) diplomates certified in an ABPN subspecialty, apart from Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, are required to maintain their primary specialty certification. Effective July 2019, diplomates currently certified in a multidisciplinary subspecialty administered by a member board **other than** the ABPN (pain medicine or sleep medicine) now have the **option** of following the lead of that member board regarding their primary Continuing Certification assessment (Part III) requirement.

See the [Exam Schedule](#) on our website for CC examination dates, application availability and deadlines. Applications for CC exams are only available online through ABPN Physician Portal. Diplomates are responsible for applying for CC exams at the appropriate time.

[Combined CC examinations](#) are available for physicians who wish to recertify in more than one specialty and/or ABPN subspecialty at the same time. Combined CC examinations allow the diplomate to select either two or three specialty or subspecialty areas in which they are certified and take one CC combined examination instead of two or three separate CC examinations. Combined examinations consist of 100 questions from each specialty or subspecialty area.

Successful completion of the CC Combined Exam is required of diplomates seeking Continuing Certification in **all** of the specialties and/or subspecialties selected. To successfully complete this exam, a diplomate must achieve an overall passing score on the entire examination. CC modules are not passed or failed individually.

Only CC examinations administered by ABPN are available in the combined examination format. The following CC examinations administered by other Boards are NOT available in the combined format: Brain Injury Medicine, Pain Medicine, and Sleep Medicine.

View the [ABPN Policies](#) or the ABPN website for each examination for additional information.

CC examinations are administered at over 200 Pearson VUE Professional Centers throughout the United States and Canada, as well as at selected Pearson VUE international test centers. Diplomates who select the international testing option when applying for an examination will be contacted by ABPN regarding locations.

Learn what to expect when you arrive at the Pearson VUE test centers on the ABPN Pearson VUE webpage:  
<https://home.pearsonvue.com/abpn>.

View the [Computer Based Testing at Pearson VUE FAQs](#) for more information. ABPN examination [sample screens](#) can be found on the ABPN website.

## **B. Article-Based Continuing Certification (ABCC) Pathway**

All diplomates have the option to participate in the ABCC Pathway for their ABPN-administered certifications. Diplomates need to complete a set of article exams for each active certification in the article-based pathway. Diplomates will need to successfully complete the article exams by the end of each 3-year cycle in order to be excused from taking a **future** traditional CC examination. Each article exam has five questions directly associated with the article. Article exams are completed online in the ABPN Physician Portal. Result feedback is immediate.

Refer to the [ABCC section](#) on the ABPN website for details.

## **4. Performance in Practice (PIP)**

**Diplomates choose ONE Clinical Module OR Feedback Module to complete the PIP activity.**

This quality improvement exercise is designed for clinically active physicians to identify and implement plans for improvement based on the review of one's own patient charts (Clinical Module) OR feedback from peers or patients via a questionnaire/survey (Feedback Module).

Each Module consists of three steps to be completed *within* a three-year CC block:

Step A: Initial Assessment

Step B: Identify and Implement Improvement

Step C: Reassessment

### **General Information**

- Diplomates who are clinically active and/or engaged in consultative care will need to complete a PIP activity. See the Clinical Activity Status page for more information.
- Please allow ample time to complete the PIP activity (Steps A, B and C).
- Use the same feedback option for the initial assessment and reassessment steps.
- One PIP activity is required per 3-year block.
- ABPN does not collect patient or peer data. If audited, ABPN will require that diplomates explain how they carried out the Performance in Practice Activity and submit information about their process and improvement plan. The [ABPN Audit Guidelines for Diplomates](#) document lists the documentation needed in the event of an audit.
- Preapproval is not needed if the questionnaire/survey addresses the six general competencies: patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, practice-based learning, professionalism, and systems-based practice.

## **A. Clinical Chart Review Module**

Diplomates demonstrate their involvement in quality improvement by choosing one of the following options:

- Select a Clinical Module from the ABPN Approved CC Activities List
- Participate in your institution's QI effort that is approved by the ABMS Portfolio Program
- Participate in an approved registry such as the Axon Registry from the American Academy of Neurology or the PsychPRO Registry from the American Psychiatric Association. Participate in an approved registry such as the PsychPRO Registry from the American Psychiatric Association. AAN announced the Axon Registry closed, effective June 1, 2024. ABPN will accept Axon Registry participation during 2024 as credit toward the Continuing Certification (CC) program requirement for any CC blocks ending in 2024.
- Participate in a Joint Commission Certified Primary or Comprehensive Stroke Center
- Participate in a Joint Commission accredited, specialty-specific Ongoing Professional Practice Evaluation (OPPE). Individual preapproval is no longer required. See the website for examples.
- Complete a quality improvement effort under the auspices of an International Certification Organization (e.g. RCPS-C) that meets the ABPN CC requirements; submit for preapproval or

- Seek individual preapproval (at no charge) for your own developed Clinical Module, or your institution's quality improvement efforts. Submit for preapproval using the [Individual Performance in Practice \(PIP\) Approval Request Form](#).

### How to complete the Clinical Module

#### Step A: Initial assessment of five patient charts

- Collect data from at least five of your own patient charts in a specific category (diagnosis, type of treatment, or treatment setting) obtained from your practice over the previous three-year period.
- Compare the data from the five patient cases with published best practices, practice guidelines, or peer-based standards of care (e.g., hospital QI programs, standard practice guidelines published by specialty societies), using a minimum of four quality measures.

#### Step B: Identify and Implement Improvement

- Based on results from chart reviews, develop and carry out a plan to improve effectiveness and/or efficiency of your medical practice.
- If no areas for improvement are determined based on initial assessment, then maintenance of performance in medical practice should be reassessed in Step C.

#### Step C: Reassessment of five patient charts

- Within 24 months of initial assessment, collect data from another five of your own patient charts (may use same or different patients).
- Use the same category and practice guidelines for the initial assessment and reassessment steps.

## B. Patient or Peer Feedback Module

For the Feedback Module, clinically active diplomates collect feedback regarding their own clinical performance by completing one of the following options. The Feedback Module consists of three steps to complete within a 24-month period.

### How to Complete a Feedback Module

#### Step A: Initial assessment of patient or peer feedback

Collect initial feedback from ONE of the following options:

- Patient\* feedback forms from five patients
- Peer\*\* feedback forms from five peers
- Resident evaluation feedback forms from five residents
- Supervisor evaluation feedback form from one supervisor or
- 360 Degree evaluation feedback forms from five respondents

Diplomates may choose a feedback module from the Approved CC Activities List, or use an ABPN feedback form, or use their institution's patient survey or peer evaluation, provided they address the six general competencies. The feedback forms must address the six general competencies: patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal and communication skills, practice-based learning and improvement, professionalism, and systems-based practice.

#### Step B: Identify and implement improvement

- Based on results from feedback, identify opportunities for improvement to the effectiveness and/or efficiency in practice as related to the general competencies and take steps to implement improvements as needed.
- If no areas for improvement are determined based on initial assessment, then maintenance of performance in medical practice should be reassessed in Step C.

#### Step C: Reassessment of patient or peer feedback

- Within 24 months of initial assessment, collect data from another set of the same or different patients or peers.
- Use the same feedback option for the initial assessment and reassessment steps.

ABPN feedback forms are available on the ABPN Approved CC Activities List at no cost.

\* Patients may include those for which the diplomate supervises the care of another provider (e.g., resident).

\*\* Peers may include other professional healthcare staff such as counselors, nurses, physicians, psychologists, and social workers.

## 5. Clinical Activity Status

The ABMS has issued definitions of ‘Clinically Active’ and ‘Clinically Inactive’ and requires that all diplomates self-report their status once every 24 months in each area of certification. This information is reported to the public.

1. **Clinically Active:** Any amount of direct and/or consultative patient care has been provided in the preceding 24 months. This includes the supervision of residents. These diplomates need to complete the PIP requirement.
2. **Clinically Active- Not Enough for a PIP:** Physicians who are active, but are primarily in research, academic, or administrative roles insufficient to complete the PIP requirement. These diplomates do not need to complete the PIP requirement.
3. **Clinically Inactive:** Physicians who have not clinically or consultatively provided patient care in the past 24 months (i.e. medical leave, not practicing). These diplomates do not need to complete the PIP requirement.

If a diplomate is clinically active in at least one certification, they will need to complete the PIP requirement.

**Diplomates must update their Clinical Activity Status in the *Certifications* section in ABPN Physician Portal, [www.abpn.org/physicianportal](http://www.abpn.org/physicianportal).**

## D. Alternative Continuing Certification (CC) Activity Options

### 1. CC Activity Waiver for Fellowships

A three-year block of CC requirements (CME, SA CME, and PIP) will be waived for diplomates who graduated from an ACGME-accredited subspecialty fellowship training program, an ACGME accredited Triple Board program or an ABPN-approved Post Pediatrics Portal program AND who pass the corresponding ABPN or an ABMS Member Board subspecialty certification exam. Diplomates will receive a three-year block CC activity waiver for the current block they are in at the time of passing the initial subspecialty exam.

Upon passing the subspecialty exam, diplomates will see the waiver reflected in their Physician Portal. Diplomates who meet the criteria via another ABMS Member Board subspecialty will need to email the Board an individual request prior to the waiver being applied.

Diplomates are required to pay the annual fee and attest to completion of an approved patient safety activity (if applicable).

If a diplomate believes they are eligible for the credit, but did not receive notice of the credit waiver, they should contact the Board via [questions@abpn.org](mailto:questions@abpn.org).

### 2. ABMS Portfolio Program

The ABPN recognizes that many physicians already participate in quality improvement (QI) activities in their local institutions. The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Portfolio Program is an alternative pathway for healthcare organizations that support physician involvement in QI activities to be approved for CC PIP credit.

A list of Portfolio Program institutions can be found on the ABMS Portfolio Program website. Physicians should contact the portfolio program manager at their institution for a list of approved activities.

ABPN Diplomates who successfully complete an approved QI program receive credit for one PIP Clinical Module. If the approved QI activity includes a patient or peer survey, ABPN Diplomates may also receive credit for one PIP Feedback Module. Diplomates are only required to complete ONE Clinical Module OR Feedback Module activity to complete the PIP activity.

### 3. ABMS Member Board Reciprocal CC Credit

ABPN diplomates who are currently board certified in good standing and completing Self-Assessment (Part II) and/or Performance in Practice (PIP) requirements of another ABMS Member Board will also be able to claim that Self-Assessment (Part II) and/or Performance in Practice (PIP) credit for the ABPN CC Program.

To maintain ABPN certification and earn reciprocal CC credit from another ABMS Member Board, diplomates must:

- Complete all Part II activities at one ABMS Member Board to receive reciprocity credit from ABPN.
- Complete reciprocal CC activities during the current ABPN CC block.
- Satisfy all components of the ABPN CC Program.
- **Pass the ABPN CC exam every 10 years or successfully complete the ABPN Article-Based Continuing Certification**

**(ABCC) Pathway every 3-year CC block to remain certified by ABPN.**

- Provide documentation of good standing in the CC Program from the other ABMS board if audited by ABPN.
- Attest to the reciprocal credit in the *Continuing Certification Activity Requirements* section of ABPN Physician Portal and pay the annual fee.
- Maintain a full, unrestricted, active US or Canadian medical license.

## **E. Continuing Certification Statuses**

### **1. Diplomates Not Meeting CC Requirements**

Diplomates in CC need to satisfy all the CC requirements per three-year block to maintain their certification status. A diplomate will be reported as “Certified- Not Meeting CC Requirements” if he/she does not sign on to his/her ABPN Physician Portal, pay the annual fee, and attest to completed activity requirements, and have an active, full, unrestricted medical license on file by the end of a 3-year block. A diplomate may change his/her status to “Meeting CC Requirements” by completing insufficient block activities, current block activities, and payment of all required fees. A diplomate will be reported as “Not Certified” if he/she does not complete 6 years (2 blocks) of CC requirements.

Insufficient or partial annual fees and CC activity requirements (CME, Self-Assessment, Patient Safety Activity and PIP) completed prior to a lapse in certification may not be used towards future CC blocks. Those fees and activities will expire along with the certificate(s).

### **2. Change of Status from ‘Not Certified’ to ‘Certified-Meeting CC Requirements’**

Once certification lapses, a diplomate may change his/her status back to “Certified- Meeting CC Requirements” upon successful completion of one block of CC requirements, applying and pay for recertification, and passing a CC examination or successful completion of the Article-Based Pathway for each certification they wish to recertify in.

### **3. Continuing Certification for Non-Time Limited Certificate Holders**

Physicians certified in psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, neurology, or neurology with special qualification in child neurology before October 1, 1994, were granted non-time limited (formerly known as Lifetime) certificates.

Participation in the CC program is not required for diplomates with non-time limited certificates; however, credentialing requirements for hospitals, practice groups, and third-party payers may require evidence of continuous certification efforts. In addition, some states are considering the implementation of Maintenance of Licensure Programs, similar to the CC program.

Non-time Limited Certificate holders can voluntarily participate in the CC program by opting into either the Exam or the Article-based Pathway through their ABPN Physician Portal. Diplomates will immediately be listed as ‘Meeting CC Requirements’, and have the next three years to complete the first 3-year block of CC requirements (90 Category 1 CME, of which 16 need to come from Self-Assessment(SA) CME, one Patient Safety activity, and one Performance in Practice (PIP) activity, as well as pay the annual fee, in addition to either passing the traditional CC exam or successful completion of 20 article exams.

Upon recertifying, diplomates will continue to complete the 3-year block requirements, as well as article exams (if ABCC Pathway is chosen) to continue to have the certification status of ‘Meeting CC Requirements’.

Non-Time Limited certificate holders who voluntarily participate in the CC program and do not pass the CC examination or are unsuccessful with the ABCC Pathway will retain their non-time limited certificate. Non-Time Limited certificate holders who do not participate in CC will be reported to the ABMS and on the ABPN website as, ‘Certified-Not meeting CC requirements and not required to do so.’”

Non-Time Limited certificate holders must always maintain an active, full, unrestricted medical license to remain Board certified.

### **4. Non-Active Diplomates**

Former diplomates whose certification(s) lapsed/expired can recertify via the traditional CC/recertification exam or article-based pathway. In order to apply for recertification, they must have an active, full, unrestricted medical license and complete one block of activity requirements: 90 Category 1 CME credits, including 16 self-assessment (SA) CME credits, and 1 PIP activity from the previous three years. Documentation of the completed requirements will need to be emailed for auditing purposes.

### **5. Diplomate Audits**

The ABPN will randomly audit approximately five percent of diplomates in the CC Program each year. Diplomates who are audited will receive an email detailing the documentation required as evidence of completion of required CC activities (CME, Self-

Assessment CME, Patient Safety, if applicable, and PIP activities). Diplomates will be notified of the audit following completion of a three-year CC block.

Diplomates with expired or invalidated ABPN certificates will be audited upon re-entry into the ABPN certification process.

Diplomates who fail the CC program audit will have their certification status changed to “Certified - Not Meeting CC Requirements”. Diplomates will have the remaining time in their next block to provide their ABPN auditor with the documentation to satisfy the requirements of the audit. If the requirements of the audit are met within this timeframe, the audit will be changed to a PASS status and the certification status will be updated to “Certified - Meeting CC Requirements”. If the requirements of the audit have not been met by the end of the next block (6 years), a diplomate will be reported as “Not Certified”.

See the [ABPN Audit Guidelines for Diplomates](#) document on our website for more information.

## F. Responsibilities

### 1. Responsibilities of Diplomates

- Diplomates are responsible for understanding and following current requirements for CC and submitting application materials for CC examinations or article-based pathway by the appropriate deadlines.
- Diplomates are responsible for keeping their medical license information up to date.
- Diplomates are responsible for keeping their mailing and email address up to date.
- Diplomates are required to continuously satisfy their CME, SA CME, Patient Safety, and PIP requirements.
- Diplomates are responsible for choosing their own CC activities. Physicians may choose the Continuing Medical Education, Self-Assessment and Performance in Practice plans that will best address their own needs, expand their expertise, and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their practice. Any Category 1 CME activities that are relevant to their practice will be acceptable. Self-Assessment and PIP activities must be chosen from the ABPN Approved CC Activities List.
- Diplomates must successfully complete the CC examination or the Article-Based Pathway for each specialties and/or subspecialties in which they are certified in order to retain certification in that specialty/subspecialty.
- Diplomates must keep a file of documentation related to completed CC activities. In the event of an audit, ABPN may request documentation of completed CC activities from the past 3 years.

### 2. Responsibilities of the ABPN

- The ABPN will provide online services for the convenience of diplomates through ABPN Physician Portal. The Physician Portal includes mechanisms for tracking diplomates’ CC requirements and activities, online applications for applying and paying for CC assessments (exam or ABCC pathway) and updating personal contact information in [www.abpn.org/physicianportal](http://www.abpn.org/physicianportal).
- The ABPN will provide electronic reminders (email) to diplomates regarding requirements, assessment reminders, updates to the CC program, and other information of interest to diplomates. This information will be provided by email or via the website, [www.abpn.org](http://www.abpn.org).
- The ABPN will make available a current examination schedule on our website ([www.abpn.org](http://www.abpn.org)). This examination schedule will include examination date choices and application deadlines. Applications are made through ABPN Physician Portal and are available three months before the initial deadline. Applications received after the initial deadline will incur a late fee.
- The ABPN will make available online information for each examination three months before the application deadline. This information will include details about the requirements for admission and the administration of each examination and will remain available for reference until the subsequent publication. A blueprint describing the content of each examination will be available on the website.
- The ABPN will collaborate with professional organizations to ensure the availability of adequate numbers of approved activities.
- The ABPN staff will be available by email and phone during regular business hours to answer questions about requirements and examinations and offer ABPN Physician Portal and CC support.

## G. ABPN Physician Portal

The ABPN Physician Portal is a single information source for physicians in all stages of his/her relationship with the ABPN – from resident through seasoned diplomate engaged in Continuing Certification (CC). All ABPN Board Certified physicians have an ABPN Physician Portal.

Your ABPN Physician Portal is a customized and secure account to:

- Manage and update personal contact information
- Keep medical licenses up to date
- Apply and pay for exams
- View and attest to your CC requirements
- Access the article exam platform
- Pay your annual fee
- View score results
- Request formal verification of certification letters

Visit [www.abpn.org/physicianportal](http://www.abpn.org/physicianportal).

## H. Finally

The ABPN has made every effort to create a Continuing Certification (CC) program that will meet the requirements of our diplomates well into the future. The program is modified periodically to adjust to changes in the needs of our diplomates and to meet new requirements of the ABMS.

It is the desire of the ABPN to continue to provide services that will enhance our diplomates' practice. To that end, the Board welcomes the comments and ideas of our diplomates and encourages them to contact the ABPN office at [questions@abpn.org](mailto:questions@abpn.org) with any questions or concerns.

For more information, please visit the Diplomates-Continuing Certification section at [www.abpn.org](http://www.abpn.org).

American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc.  
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