



AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC BOARD OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

AOBFP Certification Update: A Message from the Chair

The year 2020 was a difficult year to say the least. All our lives were affected in so many ways. The activities of our professional societies were altered, changed, or cancelled. Meetings became virtual, work became more stressful, and first line health workers were pushed to their limits. We owe special thanks and gratitude to our physicians, their staffs, their families, and to all the AOA staff who worked tirelessly to assure the best care in the Osteopathic tradition and to move the profession forward.

I would like to personally thank Dr. Klauer and the AOA staff, especially all the Certifying Board Services staff, for their flexibility and commitment to assure there would be no threat to AOA certification due to testing and meeting cancelations. During the past year, the AOBFP has worked closely with the AOA to assure the certification processes remain intact during these difficult times. With the cancelation of our OMT performance exams, the AOA has given waivers for those unable to take the exam due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is our hope that the performance exam will be able to resume by OMED 2021.

I am pleased to share some of the changes in AOBFP certification that were approved in 2020.

Early Entry Initial Certification (EEIC) Examination

Our Early Entry Initial Certification Examination (EEIC), having been approved by the Bureau of Specialists, has now been offered for the second year. In January of 2020, 320 family medicine residents took this exam. In January 2021, 289 residents took this exam. To qualify for this pathway, a resident must take the Osteopathic Inservice Exam (ISE) two out of three years of residency. The advantages of the EEIC pathway over the traditional initial certification pathway are:

1. A shorter initial certification exam
2. A lower exam fee

For specific information on EEIC, visit the [AOBFP website](#).

Certification in Family Medicine and OMT:

If you have passed the initial performance exam for certification in OMT, you will no longer be **required** to pass it again to maintain certification in OMT. There are now two options to maintain this certification.

1. You may still register and take the performance exam.
2. You may complete 4 hours of AOBFP approved hands-on OMT workshop training every 3 years.

After much discussion with the ACOFP and their "Boot Camp" committee, an agreement was reached on a format that AOBFP could support. This was presented to the SRC of BOS and approved to qualify for this requirement.

AOA Ambassador Program

The AOA recently launched an Ambassador program that is intended to introduce a strategic, peer-to-peer approach to cultivating relationships between AOA physician Ambassadors and the program directors and residents throughout the United States.

Members of AOBFP will be participating in this program and we look forward to interacting with residents and program directors to explain and advocate for Osteopathic certification.

Reciprocity for ABFM certified Osteopathic Physicians

Reciprocal AOA board certification will be granted to osteopathic physicians who have an active ABMS certificate issued by an ABMS member board on or before November 21, 2020. Reciprocity will be free to AOA members. Non-members will be assessed a fee of \$299. To maintain AOA certification, DOs will need to meet requirements for Osteopathic Continuous Certification. For more information, please visit the [AOA website](#).

On a personal note: I would like to emphasize the additional advantages a diplomate has by being a member of the AOA. Even though AOA membership is no longer required to maintain AOA certification, being a member brings many benefits that go beyond certification. In 1965 I was accepted to Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. In 1970 I began my career in Osteopathic Family Medicine. I have been a member of the AOA my entire career. The support we as osteopathic physicians receive from advocacy efforts, legal support, representation on state and federal health care committees, and much more, is well worth membership. Recent events where our entire profession was disparaged by certain media personalities is a good example of how your AOA stepped up, defending you and me as osteopathic physicians. Thank you Dr. Klauer and your staff for your leadership.

In summary, the AOBFP is committed to providing a high standard of requirements for certification, diplomate friendly processes, appropriate fees, and a high level of support for our diplomates. As a 9-member board serving nearly 15,000 current diplomates, our task sometimes seems daunting, but we will always be dedicated to continued innovation and improvement.

Best wishes for 2021,

John R. Bowling DO, FACOFP dist

Chair, AOBFP