

SNMMI Newsline

Retired ABNM Diplomates

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The American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) has received inquiries from physicians who plan to retire and would like to continue their certification during retirement. The reasons for continuing certification include the importance of professional identity, confirmation of career-long commitment and expertise for potential return to work in some capacity, as well as supporting the mission of the ABNM. Retired physicians, however, may not have the means or desire to continue full medical licensure, fulfill all the requirements of Maintenance of Certification, and pay annual fees.

What does it mean to be retired? Retired academic physicians (emeriti) may be recalled to work. Some physicians may do occasional consulting. Any physician may do volunteer clinical work, teaching, or writing. The 24 member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) have a policy on retired status, with the following definition and requirements:

- Possession of an active certificate at the time of retirement;
- No license restrictions at the time of retirement in any jurisdiction due to disciplinary actions;
- Attestation to no longer being actively engaged in direct, indirect, and/or consultative patient care, overseeing medical laboratories, or supervising in a medical field; and
- Not performing any function for which board certification is required.

The ABNM has certified 5,972 physicians since 1972. The board issued lifetime certificates until 1991 and started issuing 10-year certificates in 1992. The ABNM does not require diplomates to report retirement, so the precise

number of retired diplomates is unknown. Approximately 29% of diplomates with lifetime certificates are retired. The proportion of retired diplomates with time-limited certificates is less than 2%.

Physicians who wish to continue certification after retirement should notify the board. Physicians must meet the ABMS criteria listed above to receive retired status. Physicians who wish to maintain certification after their current certificate expires must meet the requirements of Maintenance of Certification. Diplomates with no clinical responsibility can request a waiver of the requirement for Improvement in Medical Practice. The requirements for medical licensure, continuing medical education, and assessment of knowledge, skills, and judgment are unchanged. Physicians may conveniently fulfill the third requirement by participating in CertLink, ABNM's longitudinal assessment program. Retired physicians who meet these requirements will continue to be designated as certified on public websites. Retired physicians who do not want to continue certification will be designated as retired. Physicians who let their certificates expire without notifying the ABNM will not be listed.

It is important to note that ABNM diplomates certified by more than 1 ABMS member board cannot maintain different statuses with each board. The ABMS will notify all member boards of any changes for diplomates who have certifications issued by more than 1 board. The ABMS will display retired status for all of the physician's certifying member boards on public websites and professional databases.



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