

Continuing Education and Board Certification Promote Higher Standards in Practice

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This month I'd like to recognize the high academic and practice standards of our membership, and the work done by AsMA members and staff to support those standards.

Board Certification promotes, sustains, and documents the achievement of high standards for specialties and subspecialties. It represents the consensus of the professional community on what an expert practitioner in the field should know. It is developed by peers and maintained and validated by current literature and practice guidelines. To have a board certification is a significant accomplishment, attesting to a level of expertise beyond that of licensure, beyond that required by law or policy.

In addition to many specialties relevant to aerospace, AsMA supports two that are very specific to our mission. The American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) oversees board certification in Aerospace Medicine, which AsMA specifically supports with applicable continuing education credits.³ AsMA is, itself, the granting agency for board certification in Aerospace Physiology, "to encourage the study, improve the practice, and elevate the standards of excellence in aerospace physiology."¹

Many, but not all, board certifications require continuing education and some require periodic retesting in order to maintain certification. While there is considerable controversy on how often and how effectively maintenance and retesting should be accomplished,⁴ the intent is sound: to ensure that expertise remains current in the rapidly advancing biomedical environment of this 21st century. To this end, continuing education credits are used to track exposure to new, impartial, and critically analyzed information.

AsMA works hard to ensure that our Annual Scientific Meeting will provide needed credits to as many of our constituent specialties as possible, and administers the board certification examination in Aerospace Physiology, every year. A recent agreement with the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Association (UHMS) has expanded our ability to provide accredited continuing education hours, and we greatly appreciate their role in navigating the accreditation process.

UHMS is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide credits for physicians. The UHMS and AsMA work together to jointly accredit our Annual Scientific Meetings for *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*TM. The annual meeting is authorized by the American Osteopathic Association to provide AOA Category 1-B credits for osteopaths. It is accepted for AAFP Prescribed credits by the

American Academy of Family Physicians. Each year, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) provides Continuing Medical Education for Aviation Medical Examiners. Continuing Nursing Education Recognition Credit through the Montana Nurses Association is available for those who need it. In addition, AsMA offers several hours of training at each year's scientific meeting specifically aimed at fulfilling the need for Maintenance of Certification modules satisfying Part II credit.

As an Aerospace Physiologist, I must highlight Board Certification in Aerospace Physiology. It does not currently require maintenance (MOC), nor is an advanced degree required in order to sit for the exam, although I recommend some studying. For those wishing to pursue it, information is available on the webpages of the Aerospace Physiology Society,¹ the AsMA constituent organization whose dedicated, board certified members administer and maintain the process with continual updates and validations.

For our non-U.S. based members, we would like to better serve your needs in this area, and I encourage anyone interested to contact the Global Liaison and Outreach Committee.

Please remember at registration time that the Annual Scientific Meeting offers CME and MOC. As the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) website states, "Better patient care is built on higher standards."²

REFERENCES

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