

## **Background**

Currently, physicians who completed internal medicine residency internationally, and then complete ACGME accredited fellowship training in the US, do not have a pathway to ABIM certification because their residency training does not meet ABIM's requirements for eligibility in Internal Medicine. ABIM has identified a *minimum* of ~4000 physicians with this type of training background between 2015-2023.

ABIM does have an [existing pathway to certification](#) for international medical graduates who attain faculty positions, but this pathway does not provide certification eligibility for many. The ABIM Council is now considering a new pilot program that would create a pathway to certification for those who complete ACGME accredited fellowship in the US but completed residency internationally.

## **Proposed Pilot Program & Rationale**

Pilot participant eligibility:

- Completed internal medicine residency training internationally
- Met ACGME criteria for ACGME-defined 'exceptionally-qualified candidate' (ACGME [Common Program Requirements](#) III.A.1.c), including ECFMG-certification
- Satisfactorily completed ACGME accredited fellowship, i.e. fulfilled core competencies and milestone standards in the discipline

Pilot program structure:

- After satisfactory completion of an ACGME accredited IM subspecialty fellowship, pilot participants will be granted eligibility to take the ABIM Internal Medicine Certifying Examination
- Pilot participant must pass the Internal Medicine Certifying Exam to be eligible to take the Subspecialty Examination
- If the pilot participant passes the Internal Medicine Certifying Exam and has met the other requirements for subspecialty exam eligibility, pilot participants may then take the Subspecialty Certification Examination in the discipline in which they completed accredited training.

*Rationale –*

- Many physicians are already training in ACGME accredited fellowships without having done ACGME accredited IM residencies
- The pilot would open a pathway to assess knowledge & skills before and during independent practice of this large group with both certification and MOC.
- Pilot structure allows for an eventual data-driven decision about whether to pursue an official certification eligibility pathway, and to answer important questions, e.g. do these physicians remain practicing in the US? Do these physicians practice in the discipline of their training/certification? Etc...
- Pilot participants who achieve certification have ongoing assessment with MOC encouraging them to remain current in knowledge and practice throughout the course of career.
- Connects to Competency Based Medical Education (CBME) principles through competency requirements for admission to fellowship using the ACGME Exceptionally Qualified Candidate requirements and through accredited training evaluations of core competencies and milestones

- Could help some disciplines (e.g. Infectious Disease, Nephrology, Geriatric Medicine) which have not historically filled their training positions

### **Next Steps**

This outreach effort is intended to gather your input on the above proposal. ABIM will share the survey results, along with a range of other external stakeholder feedback, with the [ABIM Council](#) for their ultimate decision on whether to pursue a pilot program. ABIM would need to seek approval from the American Board of Medical Specialties prior to implementing a pilot program.