



## American Board of Medical Specialties

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### **National Defense Authorization Act Recognizes American Board of Medical Specialties Member Boards in New Legislation Defining Physician Certification Organizations**

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Boards have been formally designated by the Defense Health Agency (DHA) as physician certifying organizations. Signed into law on December 23, 2024, the [Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025](#) establishes the standards for recognition of physician certifying bodies and has named the [24 ABMS Member Boards](#) as organizations that meet the newly approved criteria.

Under the new law, organizations seeking to be recognized by the DHA as physician certifying bodies are required to:

- Maintain a process to define, periodically review, enforce, and update specific standards regarding knowledge and skills of the specialty or subspecialty;
- Administer a psychometrically valid assessment to determine whether a physician/medical specialist meets standards for initial certification, recertification, or continuing certification;
- Establish and enforce a code of professional conduct; and
- Require that a physician/medical specialist satisfy the certifying body's requirements for both initial certification and recertification or continuing certification requirements of the certifying body that granted the initial certification.

These standards were developed based on definitions of certification programs by the [Institute for Credentialing Excellence](#) and the [American Medical Association](#). Led by Congressman Brad R. Wenstrup (R-OH), the standards were created in an effort to ensure that United States service members and veterans receive specialty medical care that meets established safety and quality standards. The DHA standards reflect quality care that all patients deserve and should be adopted by other federal and state agencies looking to expand the certification options available to physicians.

The new law reaffirms that medical specialty certification is a critical component of the country's health care system, helping to assure the clinical competence of the specialty physician workforce. Providing an independent evaluation of a physician or medical specialist's knowledge and skills to safely practice specialty medicine, ABMS Member Board certification has been a trusted credential by hospitals, payers, and patients and their families for more than 90 years. ABMS and its Member Boards remain committed to the value and importance of board certification, evaluating their programs and making ongoing improvements to ensure they are relevant to the practice of their specialties and include ongoing development of skills that are important to patients and employers.