

Education Section

Certification in Neuromuscular Medicine

In September 2005, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) approved a joint application by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) and the American Board of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (ABPMR) to develop subspecialty certification in Neuromuscular Medicine.

The goals of the certification process are to improve education, research, and patient care in neuromuscular medicine and to recognize board certified neurologists, child neurologists, and physiatrists who have developed special expertise in this area. Neuromuscular medicine includes disorders of the anterior horn cell, peripheral nerve, neuromuscular junction, and muscle. This includes many common conditions such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, peripheral neuropathies, muscular dystrophies, inflammatory neuropathies, and myasthenia gravis. The new specialty reflects the increasing scientific knowledge about the pathophysiology, genetics, diagnosis, and treatment of neuromuscular diseases at a level that is significantly beyond the training and knowledge expected of a general physiatrist, general neurologist, and child neurologist [1].

The ABPN is responsible for examination development, administration, scoring, and analysis. The ABPMR will credential and issue the subspecialty certificates for ABPMR diplomates. The examination development committee has representatives from both ABPMR and ABPN.

The first examination is scheduled for September 8–12, 2008. Applications for the 2008 examination are available online via the ABPMR website from December 1 through February 15.

All applicants for subspecialty certification in Neuromuscular Medicine must be current ABPMR diplomates in good standing and have a current, valid, and unrestricted license(s) to practice medicine or osteopathy in a United States or Puerto Rico licensing jurisdiction, or licensure in Canada.

The educational requirements for subspecialty certification in Neuromuscular Medicine can be fulfilled by either:

- satisfactory completion of 12 months in an ACGME-accredited fellowship with at least six months spent in clinical care of patients with neuromuscular disorders. The remaining six months of the fellowship will be flexible and may be spent studying related fields such as medical genetics, muscle pathology, electrodiagnostic medicine, or research. Physiatrists interested in this subspecialty may satisfy the requirements with six months' training in clinical neuromuscular medicine and six months in an EMG lab.

-OR-

- meeting temporary criteria (available through the 2012 examination) whereby ABPMR diplomates who consider themselves neuromuscular medicine specialists by virtue of time and effort may take the subspecialty examination by verifying a minimum of 25% of professional time devoted to neuromuscular medicine for a minimum of two years, or one year of non-ACGME-approved training in neuromuscular medicine.

Beginning with the 2013 examination, all applicants will be required to complete one full year of training in neuromuscular medicine in an ACGME-accredited program.

Reference

- [1] M.J. Aminoff, J.M. Massey et al., Certification in Neuromuscular Medicine: a New Neurologic Subspecialty, *Neurology* **68**(14) (2007), 1153–1154.

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