

## ***Position Statement***

# **Joint Statement on Certification, Professional Self-Regulation, and the Use of Continuing Certification**

## **American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery / American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons**

*This Position Statement was developed as an educational tool based on the opinion of the authors. It is not a product of a systematic review. Readers are encouraged to consider the information presented and reach their own conclusions.*

The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) and the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (ABOS) share a desire to maintain high standards for the practice of orthopaedic surgery and to help practicing surgeons meet those standards. The ABOS sets standards for education, practice, and conduct through examination, certification, and continuous certification (Maintenance of Certification) for the benefit of the public; the AAOS develops guidelines for clinical practice, while creating educational and quality programs to help physicians maintain their clinical expertise, improve their clinical skills, and enhance patient care. Together these activities demonstrate our shared professional commitment to regulate and improve the practice of orthopaedic surgery and maintain public trust in the quality of orthopaedic care.

ABOS Board Certification signifies that an orthopaedic surgeon has demonstrated the knowledge, skill, clinical judgment, and professionalism essential for the safe, ethical and effective practice of orthopaedic surgery. The Academy and the Board uphold the highest possible standards of professionalism. One of the commitments we make as professionals is to keep our knowledge and skills current and to promote lifelong learning through the participation in programs of education and assessment to improve them on an ongoing basis. The AAOS and the ABOS share a belief that certification must be revalidated over time through periodic assessment and are committed to working together to assure that programs of continuing certification are clinically appropriate, support the improvement of clinical skills, and demonstrate current clinical expertise.

The AAOS and the ABOS vigorously oppose legislation that would prohibit or inhibit hospitals, employers, or others from using participation in continuous certification in the granting of privileges or employment contracts. We believe that such legislation interferes with the ability of the profession to regulate the quality of specialty care and the ability of hospital medical staffs and other health care organizations to set standards for themselves that best meet the needs of their patients and the public.

It is for these reasons that ABOS Board Certification is trusted by patients and physicians and widely used by medical groups, hospitals, health systems, health plans and employers as an essential quality indicator. Information about ABOS Board Certification and continuing certification must be available, without legal constraint, for consideration by medical groups, hospitals, health

systems, health plans and employers in making privileging and credentialing decisions.

To improve the quality of care and outcomes for patients, the ABOS establishes and maintains high standards for competence and lifelong education of ABOS Board Certified orthopaedic surgeons. The AAOS is committed to serve the profession of orthopaedic surgery and orthopaedic surgeons to provide the highest quality musculoskeletal care through education, clinical care guidelines and advocacy. The ABOS and the AAOS are committed to working together to achieve these goals.

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