



# American Academy of Sleep Medicine

July 13, 2015

Ann Tilton, MD  
Board Chair  
American Board of Psychiatry and  
Neurology  
2150 E. Lake Cook Road, Suite 900  
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

SENT VIA EMAIL

c/o Dr. Larry Faulkner: [lfaulkner@abpn.com](mailto:lfaulkner@abpn.com)

Dear Dr. Tilton:

On behalf of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), the leading professional society representing physicians who are board certified in the subspecialty of sleep medicine, I am writing to express widespread concern among our leadership and members regarding the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology's requirements for maintaining subspecialty certification.

Recently, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) announced that it is no longer requiring physicians to maintain underlying certification to stay certified in a subspecialty. Richard J. Baron, MD, President and CEO of ABIM, stated in an online announcement that, "While those underlying disciplines are important in building the foundation of knowledge for initial overlying subspecialty certification, keeping the underlying certification MOC requirement in place did not account for the increased specialization of these physicians' practices over their careers. As we work to increase the relevancy of the Maintenance of Certification program for physicians, we want to give them greater flexibility to choose to recertify in those areas that best reflect what they are doing in practice."

The AASM leadership believes that his statements apply to all sleep medicine physicians, regardless of whether they are certified by the ABIM or ABPN. Therefore, we encourage you to take a similar action by removing the requirement of maintaining specialty certification to remain certified in a subspecialty such as sleep medicine. This requirement is financially burdensome and does not align with the reality of the practice of subspecialty medicine in today's healthcare landscape.

We understand that all 24 member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) have autonomy when implementing their MOC programs.

2510 North Frontage Road, Darien, IL 60561-1511  
Phone: (630) 737-9700, Fax: (630) 737-9790  
[www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org)

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However, it is important to note that the ABPN is now one of only two ABMS member boards, along with the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM), that requires physicians subspecializing in sleep medicine to maintain specialty certification. We are sending a similar request to the ABFM.

The ABPN responds reasonably to the needs of its diplomates. This have been evidenced by your decisions to allow CME to count toward Part II, to make the Part IV feedback module component optional, and request that ABMS modify its MOC requirements to make Part IV an optional component. Both as president of the AASM and as a diplomate of the ABPN, I am hopeful that you will be equally responsive to this request.

To discuss any of these issues in more detail, please contact AASM Executive Director Jerome Barrett at (630) 737-9700.

I thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "N. F. Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Nathaniel F. Watson, MD, MSc  
President

cc: Jerome A. Barrett, Executive Director, AASM  
Larry R. Faulkner, MD, President and CEO, ABPN