

American Board of Dermatology

Five-Year Strategic Plan

In December 2022, the American Board of Dermatology's Board of Directors approved the ABD's five-year strategic plan: **Advancing Excellence and Promoting Distinction in Dermatologic Care**.

This plan will guide our efforts over the next few years as we work to continue to help our field deliver the best possible outcomes for the patients we serve.

Executive Summary

Mission

To serve the public and distinguish the profession by certifying that diplomates have the knowledge and skills to provide high-quality, safe, and effective dermatologic care.

Vision

Advance excellence in dermatologic care and improve outcomes for all patients.

Strategic Goals: The following goals are intended to sharpen the focus of the vision and mission and are what the ABD will strive to achieve in the next three to five years.

1. Cultivate and strengthen our partnership with diplomates and trainees

Why: The nature of the the relationship between ABD and our diplomates and trainees has changed over time. We have an obligation to explore new ways of interacting to most effectively meet them.

2. Support diplomates' ability to compassionately and effectively evaluate and manage patients of all backgrounds

Why: The ABD is committed to ensuring that all ABD certified dermatologists are equipped to evaluate and manage skin disease in all patients. In order to reduce racial and other health care disparities, it is imperative that all board-certified dermatolgists are well prepared to treat skin disease in patients of all skin types and backgrounds.

3. Distinguish the value of ABD Certification

Why: We believe deeply in the value and prestige of ABD certification, and heard from diplomates that better articulating and communicating the distinction of ABD certification would be of great value.

4. Enhance governance processes and effectiveness

Why: The ABD is committed to refreshing and making more transparent the governance structures and practices that will support our ability to advance the vision and mission.

The Planning Process

Work on the strategic plan began in October 2021. Hundreds of different stakeholders were involved in the planning process. Four groups played critical roles in the planning process:

- **Board of Directors.** The Board participated in interviews, focus groups, and in a Board self-assessment survey, all of which fed the expansive data collection process that informed the strategy. The Board also participated in the plan's development and approved the stages of work as they unfolded.
- **ABD Strategic Planning Task Force.** The ABD's Strategic Planning Task Force provided guidance, ideation, and input at critical junctures during the planning process. The Task Force was chaired by Stanley Miller, (Associate Executive Director, Continuing Certification) and included several members of the Executive Staff and Board of Directors: Lela Lee, Elysia McGowan, Marta Petersen, Randy Roenigk, Julie Schaffer, Bruce Bartels, Jason Castillo, Karynne Duncan, Delphine Lee, Yemi Sokumbi, and Erik Stratman.
- **ABD Strategic Planning Core Team.** The Core Team helped manage the day-to-day planning effort and coordinated work with key stakeholders. The Core Team members were executive staff members Lela Lee, Elysia McGowan, Stan Miller, Marta Petersen, Randy Roenigk, and Julie Schaffer.
- **CFAR.** CFAR, a management consulting firm with expertise in strategy, culture, change and governance, was selected to support the strategic planning effort. CFAR structured and conducted the planning process, gathered and analyzed data, designed and facilitated meetings, prepared documents and worked closely with the Core Team to guide the overall effort.

Phase I: Data Gathering and Scanning the Environment

- **Developing a shared understanding of the current state:** It was important to start with a shared understanding of the current state of the ABD's work, outcomes and operations. To develop the ABD's current state analysis, 59 structured interviews and 3 focus groups were conducted with current and past ABD Directors and staff members, subject matter experts, and other ABMS Board Directors. We also surveyed all existing ABD Diplomates and conducted several focus groups to ensure that every diplomate would have an opportunity to share his or her thoughts about the strategy. The results, along with extensive quantitative data and trend research, combined to produce a range of strategic choices that could lead to different potential futures for the ABD.

Phase II: Developing the Strategy through Scenarios

- **Making strategic choices.** The Task Force analyzed the current state analysis, which informed several strategic scenarios. The resulting three strategic scenarios were generated to further provoke the ABD's thinking about the future and to form the foundation of a strategic framework for the organization.
- **Finalizing the strategic framework.** The ABD Board of Directors focused on strategic planning during the June 2021 Board retreat. Members reviewed and explored the current state, revisited the ABD's mission and vision, and ultimately identified a focused set of strategic goals. Together, the results produced a first draft of the strategy framework that evolved over several months into our strategic plan.

Phase III: Building out the Plan and Preparing for Implementation

- **Developing and prioritizing tactics.** The next phase was to identify tactics for each strategic goal. Tactics then were plotted out to reach 6-month, 12-month, 18-month, and

24-month milestones. This work culminated in a set of focused activities for each strategic goal that outlined how each goal will be accomplished over the next 2-5 years.

Goals and Tactics

Goal 1 - Cultivate and Strengthen our Partnership with Diplomates and Trainees

This goal aims to develop lifelong partnerships with every diplomate, and together advance excellence in dermatology. As we have evolved from Maintenance of Certification's high-stakes exams to Continuing Certification and CertLink, the nature of our relationship with diplomates has changed. The new approach focuses on partnering with both trainees and diplomates over time. To achieve this goal, we must work to build trust and lifelong relationships.

Tactics to Achieve this Goal

Tactic	Action
1.1. Enhance access to education materials and articles	<p>1.1.1. Create a library for CertLink Article-Based questions that trainees, residents, and diplomates can access at any time</p> <p>1.1.2. Develop subspecialty CertLink Content Advisory Groups (CCAGs) to perform annual literature reviews in collaboration with representatives from national subspecialty organizations to identify the best articles for Article-Related questions and then write them.</p>
1.2. Connect with trainees, earlier and in different ways, to increase familiarity and comfort with the ABD	1.2.1. Partner with Program Directors to connect with trainees and share information about ABD
1.3. Continue to explore new ways of engaging with diplomates through various communication channels	<p>1.3.1. Develop and implement a communications strategy that includes embracing social media as a key tool to communicate the Board's activities, priorities, and plans to diplomates</p> <p>1.3.2. Launch a pilot to determine the value of establishing regional liaisons (directors or others) who could serve as resources for the ABD and further humanize it for stakeholders</p>
1.4. Continue to enhance the infrastructure for Practice Improvement (PI)	<p>1.4.1. Restart the infrastructure to develop new Practice Improvement (PI) Modules.</p> <p>1.4.2. Form a national consortium to identify practice/knowledge gaps in diplomates and</p>

Tactic	Action
	generate new PI modules and CertLink questions to address them.

Goal 2 - Support Diplomates' Ability to Compassionately and Effectively Evaluate and Manage Patients of All Backgrounds

The ABD is committed to ensuring that all certified dermatologists are equipped to evaluate and manage skin disease in all patients. In order to reduce racial and other health care disparities, it is imperative that all board-certified dermatologists are well prepared to treat skin disease in patients of all skin types and backgrounds.

Tactics to Achieve this Goal

Tactic	Action
2.1 Endeavor to ensure that ABD activities are unbiased.	2.1.1 Review ABD policies for bias.
	2.1.2 Review hiring, application, and appointment practices for staff, committee, and board positions.
	2.1.3 Ensure volunteer item writers represent a range of perspectives.
2.2 Endeavor to ensure that ABD examinations are unbiased.	2.2.1 Begin collecting demographic data from diplomates (with the option to opt out) to understand the composition of our specialty.
	2.2.2 Investigate methods used by other member boards to perform exam bias analysis.
	2.2.3 Review ABD examinations for bias.
	2.2.4 Perform bias analysis on our previous items/examinations, and utilize this data to avoid bias in new items.
2.3 Endeavor to ensure that our certification tools and resources appropriately represent diseases occurring in a broad spectrum of skin tones.	2.3.1. Strive to have our assessments include images of patients with skin of color in percentages that reflect census population numbers, in order to assess the ability to treat skin diseases in all patient populations.
	2.3.2. Partner with AAD, the Skin of Color Society, PROJECT IMPACT, and other relevant groups to improve knowledge gaps in skin diseases in patients with skin of color and other underrepresented minorities.
	2.3.3. Develop PI modules that address skin disease in underrepresented minorities.
2.4. Actively leverage partnerships to further our collective efforts	2.4.1. Partner with relevant organizations to leverage our collective efforts.

Goal 3 - Distinguish the Value of ABD Certification

The ABD serves the public by ensuring high standards of practice for dermatologists through initial and continuing certification. The ABD is committed to productively communicating the distinctiveness and benefits of ABD board certification to the public and other key stakeholders.

Tactics and Actions to Achieve this Goal

Tactic	Action
3.1. Generate a refreshed plan to clearly articulate the value and distinction of ABD board certification.	3.1.1. Refine a communication strategy focused on clear definition of value of certification.
	3.1.2. Develop a toolkit to bundle resources that educate diplomates about the value of certification and enable them to serve as ambassadors about its distinction.
	3.1.3. Create public-facing communications that can be disseminated through diplomates to educate the public, in language lay people can understand, about the importance and value of board certification in dermatology.
3.2. Actively leverage partnerships to further our collective efforts.	3.2.1. Collaborate with select sub-specialty societies
3.3. Increase public awareness of the value of Board certification and of how to help the public identify Board-certified physicians	3.3.1. Encourage public usage of the new Diplomat Search 2.0 website tool
	3.3.2. Consider other portions of the website we would like to encourage the public to view

Goal 4 – Enhance Governance Processes and Effectiveness

The ABD's Board of Directors currently focuses on oversight and is largely responsible for writing exam content. To enhance efficiency and create greater transparency, the Board will need to consider opportunities to update governance structures and practices in ways that best advance ABD's vision and mission. The Board of Directors will create a roadmap that addresses the design and implementation of the following actions:

1. Refresh and refine the board's purpose, and align roles, structures and processes to match.
2. Identify the expertise needed on the board, build a diverse and robust pipeline of Directors, and advance a transparent recruitment process.
3. Develop onboarding processes and approaches to board development that strengthen the effectiveness of ABD directors over the course of their board service.

V. Looking Ahead

This strategic plan will guide our work over the next few years. We will continue to monitor our progress and any changes in the environment to adjust the plan and ensure that we are doing our best to advance our mission and vision. We are excited about what the future will bring!