

2024



AMERICAN BOARD OF
DERMATOLOGY

Year In Review



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

- Cultivate and strengthen our partnership with diplomates and trainees.
- Support diplomates' ability to compassionately and effectively evaluate and manage patients of all backgrounds.
- Distinguish the value of ABD Certification.
- Enhance governance processes and effectiveness.



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ABD Board of Directors and Executive Team

Find a list of other volunteers [here](#).

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From ABD Executive Director



Each year, your ABD leadership team reviews progress toward achieving our strategic goals. In a way, it's like an annual physical exam: Are we getting stronger? Meeting our needs? Anticipating new challenges?

I'm pleased to report that in 2024, the ABD made healthy progress. This report details enhancements that increase the value of certification and strengthen our partnership with certified dermatologists and trainees.

For example, in 2024, the ABD developed four focused Practice Improvement (fPI) activities addressing dermatological use of opioids. These activities meet the mandatory education requirements for DEA registration renewal. There is no additional fee, and dermatologists can focus on opioid use in dermatological practice, instead of completing long, often expensive courses not specific to our specialty. Many of you found value in these activities -- of the 1,500 PI modules completed in 2024, nearly 1000 were DEA Opioid Training modules.

This past year, the ABD also made progress filling gaps in knowledge and skills that were identified by our volunteers and by dermatology professional organizations and subspecialty associations. In 2024, we developed 11 new practice improvement activities and updated 32 modules, many aimed at filling these gaps.

We launched a pathway to certification for qualifying dermatology faculty members who received their training outside the United States or Canada. In 2024, 11 faculty members working in the US or Canada were approved to begin the certification process through the International Pathway.

We continue to improve our exams. 2024 was the inaugural year of the Exam Development Council, a group of experienced item writers recruited to help the ABD continue to produce high-quality items and assessments. Exam Development Council members leveraged their expertise to mentor new item writers and perform a variety of item review tasks.

We also reached out to introduce the ABD to residents. We developed a video explaining the ABD's role in preparing them for certification and how Continuing Certification activities will help them stay up to date once they begin practice. We also began offering CertLink to second- and third-year residents. We are pleased that 246 residents signed up and started CertLink in January 2025.

Your Board of Directors and Executive Team want to continue finding ways to make certification a more valuable tool for you. In that spirit, Dr. Stan Miller, Dr. Erik Stratman and I met with executive directors from four other ABMS boards to learn about new initiatives. We have reported these

ideas to ABD's Strategic Advisory Committee, and decisions will be made in 2025 about which of these might benefit certified dermatologists. Stay tuned!

If you have any questions about the ABD or your specific Continuing Certification Program, please don't hesitate to contact our amazing office team. The ABD employs seven dedicated professionals who can help you with any question. You can reach them or anyone on the Executive Team at Communications@abderm.org.

Best wishes for an outstanding 2025,

Randall K. Roenigk, MD
ABD Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy", written over a white background.



The Roenigk Family



Significant progress has been made in 2024 toward the ABD's [strategic goals](#). Here are the highlights:

Cultivate and strengthen our partnership with diplomates and trainees.

Successfully Filling Gaps

In 2024, the ABD advanced its own continuous improvement by seeking input in ongoing practice gaps, assessment gaps, and other suggestions for improvement from a number of key collaborating organizations.

In 2023, 10 dermatology organizations responded to the ABD's request to identify knowledge gaps they perceive in training and/or continuing dermatology education, particularly in subspecialties. The organizations were the American Acne and Rosacea Society, American Contact Dermatitis Society, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, Association of Academic Cosmetic Dermatology, Association of Professors of Dermatology - Surgery Section, the Gay and Lesbian Dermatology Association, Hidradenitis Suppurativa Foundation, National Psoriasis Foundation, Society of Dermatology Hospitalists, Society for Investigative Dermatology.

The organizations provided references to publications supporting those areas. Then, in 2024, the ABD used this information to include more items in CertLink and certifying exams to address these knowledge gaps.

Providing Dermatology-Specific Training for Opioid Use

The ABD continually looks for ways to make continuing certification activities increasingly relevant to certified dermatologists' practice.

An outstanding example of this work is the ABD's four new dermatology-relevant focused [Practice Improvement \(fPI\) modules](#) that satisfy the training requirements for dermatologists maintaining Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) prescriber registration for opioids. Dermatologists need to complete only one of the four modules to satisfy the DEA's requirements. Each of these modules also satisfies the ABD's performance improvement requirements for five years.

Nearly 1000 dermatologists completed opioid-related modules, making these the ABD's most popular practice improvement activities in 2024. Those who completed an activity for DEA registration renewal also earned up to 20 CME credits and completed their five-year ABD practice improvement requirement.

All four modules are based on dermatology peer-reviewed literature or current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. The ABD worked with board-certified dermatology experts in opioid use in dermatology to create these modules.



Introducing Dermatology Residents to the ABD

Residents are inundated with information - often imparted in unfamiliar terminology. Frequently, meaning and context are lost. The ABD is trying to take some of the stress out of “what comes next?” in certification with two projects we kicked off in 2024.

The first is [a video](#) to introduce the ABD to first-year residents. In a brief 2½ minutes, we provide the ABD’s mission and explain our role in their training and careers. While the video is intended for first-year residents, the information is available to all dermatology trainees. We have posted it on the resident portal, and have promoted it to program directors and administrators. Our hope is that it will demystify the certification process and the ABD.

Additionally, we are trying to ease the transition to Continuing Certification. Newly certified dermatologists are automatically enrolled in CertLink, where nearly all Continuing Certification activities are completed. To provide an introduction -- or “sneak peek,” -- the ABD is offering CertLink to second- and third-year residents. In October, 246 residents signed up to start CertLink in January 2025. Residents are encouraged but not required to participate, and are not scored.





Support diplomates' ability to compassionately and effectively treat patients of all backgrounds.

Reflecting our Population

To provide effective patient care, dermatologists must have broad knowledge and skills to serve a diverse patient population, including individuals with skin of color, varied racial/ethnic groups, and sexual and gender minorities.

Our goal was to provide images that reflect the current U.S. population. Thanks to our item writers and other volunteers, we continue to meet that goal - 20 percent of all images included in assessments are of patients with skin of color, reflecting Census population percentages. Item writers strive to depict skin of color in a broad range of dermatologic diagnoses.

Choosing Diverse Content

Six CertLink Content Advisory Groups, which began their work in 2024, work to ensure that CertLink covers the most important information and publications on various topics. One of the six focuses on Skin of Color and Gender Identity Disparities. In 2024, this group developed 16 article-based questions that will be included in CertLink in 2025.





Distinguish the value of ABD Certification.

Visiting Scholars Explore Training Elements

[Vinod Nambudiri, MD, MBA, MPH, EdM](#), Associate Professor of Dermatology and Internal Medicine at Harvard Medical School, is the ABD's 2024-2025 ABMS Visiting Scholar. He is one of 11 scholars selected across all specialties to participate in the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Visiting Scholars Program.



Dr. Nambudiri is also the program director of the Harvard University Dermatology Residency Program and Associate Program Director of the Harvard Combined Internal Medicine-Dermatology Residency Training Program.

His Visiting Scholar project will be Exploring Quantitative Outcomes of Specialized Joint Training and Research Training Tracks in Dermatology.

“Dr Nambudiri is well known in the field as a critical thinker who performs high quality work,” says [Erik Stratman, MD](#), ABD Associate Executive Director for Continuous Program Improvement and Research. “His proposal to explore the outcomes of various ABD training tracks is of great interest to ABD, and we look forward to teaming with him throughout this next year and beyond.”



The ABD's first ABMS Visiting Scholar, chosen in 2023, is [Gillian Heinecke, MD](#). She is an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Dermatology at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, where she is the program director of the residency program. Her project explored the predictability of a resident's performance on their ABD [BASIC](#) Exam with future performance on the [CORE](#) and [APPLIED](#) exams. Dr Heinecke presented results of her research at the fall 2024 annual meeting of the Association of Professors of Dermatology in Chicago, IL.

“We believe this work by Dr. Heinecke will help to provide guidance to residents, program directors, mentors, and programs on how to best use the BASIC Exam score data in the future to help individual residents be successful in their journey to become board certified dermatologists,” Dr. Stratman says.

Established in 2014, the one-year, part-time Visiting Scholars Program supports early-career physicians and researchers in scholarship and leadership development, focusing on initial and continuing board certification. Each Visiting Scholar receives a \$15,000 financial award to support their research.



Establishing an International Pathway to Certification

An [International Pathway](#) to ABD certification was launched in 2024. Eleven internationally trained dermatologists with full-time faculty appointments in the U.S. or Canada have met the criteria, and their applications have been accepted. Now they



will begin signing up and taking all the exams leading up to certification - the four CORE Exam modules and the APPLIED Exam. They will take the same exams as current residents.

If they pass all the exams and have a valid license to practice medicine in the U.S. or Canada, then they will become ABD Certified.

Like all diplomates, they must maintain a valid, unrestricted license to practice medicine in the U.S. or Canada and participate in Continuing Certification activities.

Focused Practice Improvement Article in JAAD

The Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology (JAAD) recently published [an article](#) reviewing the relevance and value of the ABD's focused practice improvement activities (fPIs). The article was authored by ABD executive team members Erik Stratman, MD, Stanley Miller, MD, Randall Roenigk, MD, et.al.

The abstract of the article identifies results as:

About 19,143 fPI modules were completed by 7378 unique ABD diplomates, representing 48.8% of all current ABD-certified dermatologists (n = 15,118). Modules were rated relevant by 18,917 participants (99%). Care gaps requiring improvement efforts and performance remeasurement occurred in 2919 (15.2%) completed modules. Acne and medication-related laboratory monitoring were popular topics requiring improvement. Diplomates reported care improvements resulting from completing modules in 8397 instances (43.9%), and improved patient outcomes in at least one patient 5310 times (27.7%). Finally, diplomates stated they would recommend fPI modules to peers 18,633 (97.3%) times.





Enhance governance processes and effectiveness.

Advisory Groups Strengthen CertLink Content

CertLink Content Advisory Groups were established in 2023 to enhance CertLink content. Volunteers are assigned to one of six groups:

- Surgery
- Pediatrics
- Skin of Color Skin and Gender Identity Disparities
- Cosmetics
- Dermatopathology
- General Dermatology (Medical)

In 2024 (their first year), these groups reviewed the medical literature from the previous year and selected 55 high-impact articles relevant to practicing dermatologists. 110 questions were written from these articles (2 per article) and added to 2025 CertLink.

Exam Development Council Shares Experience

2024 was the inaugural year for the Exam Development Council. This group of experienced item writers was recruited to help the ABD continue to produce high-quality items and assessments. Exam Development Council members leveraged their expertise to mentor new item writers and perform a variety of item review tasks.

Strategic Advisory Committee Plans for the Future

In 2022, a Strategic Planning Committee developed a five-year strategic plan that was approved by the Board of Directors. The ABD Executive Staff has pledged to update diplomates, as they do in this annual Year In Review.

A 13-member Strategic Advisory Committee was appointed to lead the ABD's work to accomplish focused activities for each strategic goal and present new ideas to help us reach - and exceed - our goals. This group meets as needed throughout the year.





BASIC Examination

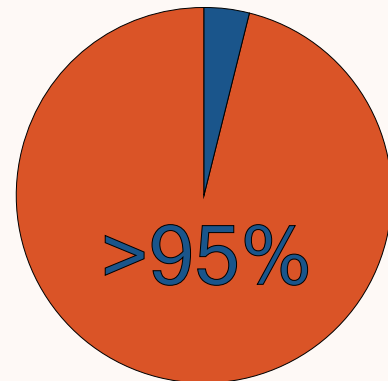
The 2024 BASIC Examination was administered March 21 to first-year residents.

- 602 residents took the exam from 148 ACGME- accredited US programs, 7 Canadian programs, and 3 international programs.
- Additionally, 27 faculty members took the exam for informational purposes.

CORE Examination

The CORE Exam comprises 4 CORE modules:

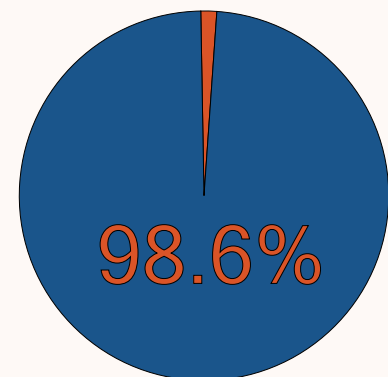
- Medical Dermatology, Pediatric Dermatology, Surgical Dermatology and Dermatopathology.
- There were 652 candidates in February, 534 candidates in July, and 423 candidates in November.
- Pass rates for each of the 4 modules have been over 95%



APPLIED Examination

The APPLIED Examination was administered to 562 graduating residents on July 11 at nationwide Pearson VUE Test Centers.

The pass rate for first-time test takers was 98.6%.



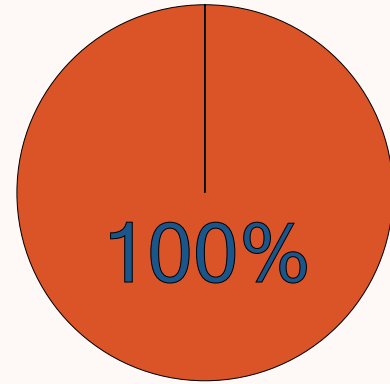
Find ABD Annual Exam Pass Rates [here](#).



Dermatopathology Subspecialty Examination

The Dermatopathology Subspecialty Certification Examination was administered by the American Board of Pathology via Pearson VUE on September 9-28. 32 Dermatologists took the exam.

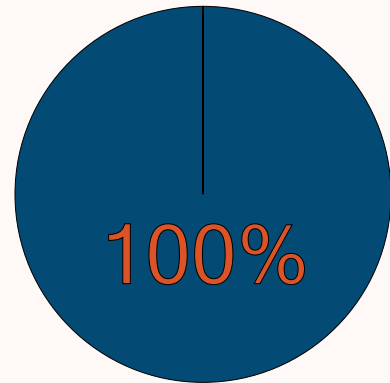
The pass rate for first-time test takers was 100%.



Pediatric Dermatology Subspecialty Examination

The Pediatric Dermatology Subspecialty Examination transitioned from bi-annual to annual administration in 2021. The 2024 exam was administered on October 15 to 23 candidates.

The pass rate for first-time test takers was 100%.

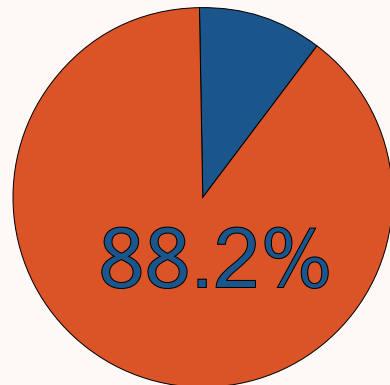


Micrographic Dermatologic Surgery Subspecialty Examination

The MDS Subspecialty examination was administered October 23-28 at nationwide Pearson VUE Test Centers to 342 candidates.

The pass rate for first-time test takers was 88.2%.

During the 5-year practice pathway, certified ABD diplomates who completed an ACGME-accredited fellowship OR who can attest to active practice of micrographic surgery are eligible to apply for the exam. When the practice pathway period closes after the 2025 exam, any ABD-certified dermatologist who wishes to become certified in MDS must complete the ACGME fellowship in MSDO to be eligible for the MDS Exam.





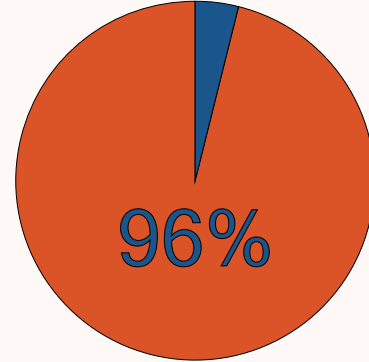
CertLink

CertLink Assessment

Since January 2020, more than 12,000 diplomates have enrolled in CertLink. Nearly 3,500 also have a subspecialty certification.

96% of Diplomates participating in Continuing Certification have enrolled in CertLink.

In 2024, the ABD began offering CertLink to second- and third-year residents. In October, 246 residents signed up to start CertLink in January 2025. Residents are encouraged but not required to participate, and their scores are only for their information.



Finances

Financial Overview

In 2024, the ABD spent more than \$4.85 million to provide certifying exams for residents and fellows, Continuing Certification activities including CertLink, focused Practice Improvement modules for Diplomates, and many other services that are all part of the certification process. We received more than \$4.15 million, primarily from fees for Continuing Certification, exams, and certification verification. Additional funds from investing the ABD’s operating reserve fund also were used for programs that add value to certification, most of which are described in this report.

Detailed financial information about the ABD’s revenue and expenses are available through the board’s tax returns (IRS 990s). You can find these reports through [Candid](#) (formerly GuideStar), ProPublica, Economic Research Center, or the IRS.



The ABD maintains a Platinum Seal of Transparency with Candid, the highest level of transparency that Candid awards. Transparency levels are based on the additional information that organizations voluntarily provide.

Contact Us



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