

CC Committee Chair Message

New Policy on Professional Conduct

Hollie Anne Lai, MD – *Continuing Certification (CC) Committee Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

The American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) has established a formal [Policy on Professional Conduct](#) that aligns with the – standards established by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). This new policy reinforces the principle that ABNM certification reflects not only a physician's knowledge and skills, but also their professionalism and ability to practice safely within the field of nuclear medicine. Under the policy, "professional conduct" extends beyond medical licensure to include behavior, both inside and outside clinical practice, that may impact patient safety, public trust, or the integrity of the certification process. Because certification carries societal trust and professional credibility, diplomates and applicants must consistently demonstrate behavior aligned with accepted professional norms. All individuals are assumed to meet these expectations unless there is credible and verifiable evidence of relevant misconduct. "Relevant misconduct", whether related or unrelated to medical practice, is defined as behavior that risks patient or public safety or undermines trust in the profession or the certification process.

To obtain or maintain ABNM certification, a physician must hold a current, complete, and unrestricted medical license in at least one US, Canadian, or territorial jurisdiction. Additionally, the physician must have unrestricted licensure in every jurisdiction where they practice. If a physician's license is restricted, suspended, revoked, surrendered, or allowed to lapse to avoid disciplinary action, the ABNM will investigate and may place sanctions on the physician's certification. These sanctions can include denial of initial certification, probation, suspension of certification, or full revocation, depending on the severity of the infraction.

The ABNM does allow for certain exceptions regarding certification. A physician may remain certified even if they have a restricted or previously problematic license, provided

they can practice at the expected standard and meet one of several criteria. These criteria include holding an unrestricted license in all active practice jurisdictions, having restrictions due to a disability, or demonstrating compelling rehabilitative circumstances. Physicians training under institutional licenses may obtain certification if they provide documentation from their program, notify ABNM of changes, and secure full licensure within the required timelines. Failure to meet these deadlines may result in suspension and, ultimately, revocation of certification. Physicians practicing exclusively outside the US or Canada are not eligible for certification unless they possess at least one unrestricted license to practice in the United States.

The ABNM may take action when breaches of professionalism occur, including exam cheating, sharing exam content, falsification of information, research or billing fraud, violation of patient legal rights, or serious negligence. Such breaches may also be reported to licensing boards, other ABMS boards, law enforcement, or credentialing entities.

To ensure ongoing compliance, the ABNM annually verifies that its diplomates hold valid, good-standing licenses. It reviews information from licensing boards, federal agencies, courts, and professional organizations. Additionally, events reported by diplomates and information shared by other member boards are considered during assessments. The ABNM evaluates all credible evidence when determining whether misconduct occurred and may take action, even if the behavior occurs outside clinical practice, especially if it poses a threat to safety or trust. The Board retains full discretion over certification decisions and may recommend that physicians participate in health programs when deemed appropriate.

The full ABNM Policy on Professional Conduct can be viewed at [ABNM Policy on Professional Conduct](#).



1030 Highlands Plaza Drive, Suite 511E
Saint Louis, Missouri 63110-1343
(314) 367-2225 | abnm@abnm.org | www.abnm.org

