REMINDER: Program Directors, Administrators, and Coordinators Enrollment ENDS October 30, 2026 for the 2027 ABNM In-Training (IT) Exam for US and Canadian programs Exam Administered January 10-22, 2027.

Official Publication of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine
A member of the American Board of Medical Specialties

ABNM AMERICAN BOARD of NUCLEAR MEDICINE Tracers

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE: SUMMER | FALL

IT EXAM | CE EXAM | CC EXAM | CERTLINK



Lisa Bodei, MD
Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Getting to Know the ABNM Staff: Experience, Commitment, and Service

Board certification involves many details: credentials, exams, deadlines, and continuous certification. For candidates and diplomates, these steps can be complicated. The ABNM staff helps....

Read MORE →



Giuseppe Esposito, MD, MBA



Lionel S. Zuckier, MD, FRCPC, MBA

Meet the Newest Members of the ABNM

The ABNM is pleased to announce the appointment of two distinguished leaders in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging to our Board of Directors.

Read MORE→



FINANCIALS

Executive Director's Message

Kirk A. Frey, MD, PhD
Executive Director, ABNM

2026 Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2025

The ABNM has an estimated total asset of...

Read MORE →



POLICIES

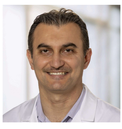
Associate Executive Director's Message

Joanna R. Fair, MD, PhD
Associate Executive Director, ABNM

Why Do We Do Things This Way? What the 2021 ABMS Standards for Continuing Certification Mean for the ABNM and ABNM Diplomates

The ABNM, as an ABMS member board, is required to implement...

Read MORE →



Young Professionals

A New Diplomate's Perspective: Reflections on Achieving ABNM Certification:

Atheel Alsagheer, MD
Assistant Professor, Nuclear Medicine
SSM Health St Louis University

Let me share with you the major takeaways from my journey, which I consider somewhat unique...

Read MORE →



COMMUNICATIONS

Building a Stronger ABNM Community Through Communication

Saima Muzahir, MD
Communications Committee Chair, ABNM

Fostering a shared vision is essential to...

Read MORE →



CONTINUING CERTIFICATION

The Evolution of CertLink: From Launch to Today

Hollie Anne Lai, MD
CC Committee Chair, ABNM

Instead of a 10-year interval between assessments...

Read MORE →

In Memoriam

Twyla Bartel, DO, MBA

1962 – 2026

Those of us fortunate enough to know Twyla well also knew that...

Read MORE →



Have Questions?

The ABNM Team is here to help you with any questions or concerns you may have. Contact the ABNM Office and a Team Member will be happy to help you.

Contact Us →



REMINDER

The Enrollment Deadline for the ABNM In-Training (IT) Exam is October 30, 2026.

Program Directors, sign in to your program's dashboard to enroll your trainees (**NOTE: Program Directors, do not sign into your individual account. Sign into your institutional account for information regarding the IT Exam**)

Enroll NOW →

2026 IT Exam Statistics

View HERE →



As Nuclear Medicine continues to grow and evolve,

so does the opportunity to strengthen our profession and support future generations of physicians. ABNM is proud to serve a community united by a shared commitment to excellence. Together, we can build on our legacy and advance the future of our specialty. Support the ABNM's mission with a charitable donation today.

Support ABNM →

FOLLOW US

ABNM AMERICAN BOARD of NUCLEAR MEDICINE
1030 Highlands Plaza Drive, Suite 511E | Saint Louis, Missouri 63110-1343 | (314) 367-2225

A Member of the American Board of Medical Specialties

Click here to download a printable PDF of this newsletter.

Message from the Chair



Getting to Know the ABNM Staff

Experience, Commitment, and Service

Lisa Bodei, MD, PhD – Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Dear Colleagues,

Behind the work of the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) is a small staff that keeps the board moving every day. Their work may not always be visible, but it is essential. Like the roots of an olive tree, their support is steady, quiet, and strong. While the Board of Directors sets policy and direction, the staff makes sure that the work can actually get done.

The Operational Backbone of Certification

Board certification involves many details: credentials, exams, deadlines, and continuous certification. For candidates and diplomates, these steps can be complicated. The ABNM staff helps make the processes clear, organized, and manageable.

They are often the first people diplomates contact when they have a question or need guidance. They track deadlines, coordinate materials, answer emails, and help carry out board policies in a consistent way. In doing so, they reduce the administrative burden on physicians and help the board maintain its standards.

Meet the ABNM Staff

Each member of the ABNM office brings something important to the board's daily work. Together, they support communications, examinations, continuous certification, and the practical needs of the Board of Directors.

Maria Muelchi MBA, Administrator. Maria is truly the beating heart of the ABNM administration. She keeps the office organized and moving, and she carries the kind of institutional knowledge that only comes from years of careful, committed work. Much of what the Board of Directors is able to accomplish depends on her coordination and follow-through.

Monica Frye, Communications and Diplomate Relations Coordinator. Monica is the voice that keeps the ABNM community informed and connected. Her work is essential because candidates and diplomates depend on timely, accurate information about exams, deadlines, and certification requirements. Through email and social media, she helps ensure that no one is left uncertain about what comes next.

Patrick Murphy, BS, RT (R) (CT), Exam and CC Program Coordinator. Patrick is central to the integrity and reliability of the exam and CertLink process. His careful work with the question sets helps make the assessments smooth, consistent, and fair. In many ways, he is one of the quiet guardians of the certification process.

The Board of Directors could not function in the same way without them. Their preparation, communication, and follow-through give board members the structure they need to focus on governance, standards, and the future of the specialty. Their steady daily work is the quiet current that carries the board forward.

Excellence Through lLngevity and Expertise

One of the ABNM office's greatest strengths is experience. Medical board work requires familiarity with ABMS guidelines, secure exam processes, and changing training requirements. That knowledge is built slowly, through years of doing the work well. The ABNM staff bring more than 40 years of combined service to the Board, with individual tenures of 20, 14, and 9 years. Through their decades of experience, they are adept in the essential work required of board staff and provide the continuity and expertise necessary to support the Board's mission.

Long-serving staff also bring something that is hard to replace: institutional memory. Their stability helps the board update technology, improve digital tools, and manage certification changes without losing continuity.

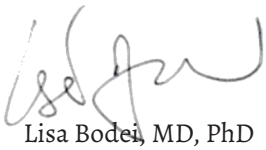
Fostering a Culture of Support and Collaboration

The staff also helps create a culture of trust. They work with program directors, department leaders, physicians, and diplomates with patience, professionalism, and practical judgment. This is especially important during busy exam and recertification periods, when people need clear answers quickly. Because they understand both the board's history and its daily operations, they also help the ABNM move forward without losing what already works.

Looking Ahead: Innovation in Administration

As nuclear medicine changes, the administrative work of the ABNM changes with it. The staff helps improve workflows, digital verification, and the continuous certification experience in practical, meaningful ways.

The ABNM succeeds because of the partnership between the Board of Directors and its staff. The directors provide vision and leadership; the staff gives that work form, continuity, and life. Their contribution deserves to be seen and appreciated: steady, generous, and enduring, like deep roots that sustain growth year after year.



Lisa Bodei, MD, PhD
Chair, ABNM

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

A Member Board of the
American Board of Medical Specialties
Higher standards. Better care.™

Meet the Newest Members of the ABNM

Welcome to Our New Board Members

The ABNM is pleased to announce the appointment of two distinguished leaders in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging to our Board of Directors. Their decades of clinical expertise, academic leadership, research accomplishments, and commitment to advancing patient care will bring exceptional value to our organization and the communities we serve.

Giuseppe Esposito, MD, MBA



We are honored to welcome Giuseppe Esposito, MD, MBA, Professor of Radiology and Chief of Nuclear Medicine and PET/CT at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, to the Board of Directors.

Dr. Esposito is an internationally recognized leader in nuclear medicine whose career has been dedicated to advancing clinical excellence, education, and research. A graduate of the University Federico II Medical School in Naples, Italy, he completed his residency training in Nuclear Medicine at the same institution and has been board certified by the American Board of Nuclear Medicine since 2001.

Throughout his distinguished career, Dr. Esposito has held significant leadership roles in both clinical practice and professional societies, including the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI). His research has focused extensively on brain imaging and neurodegenerative diseases, resulting in numerous publications that have advanced the field of molecular imaging. He has also co-chaired influential SNMMI and American College of Radiology writing committees responsible for developing practice guidelines for PET imaging in dementia and SPECT imaging of dopaminergic transmission.

At Georgetown University, Dr. Esposito leads nuclear medicine education for medical students and radiology residents, mentoring the next generation of imaging specialists through innovative training programs, including the 16-month nuclear medicine pathway. His dedication to scholarly achievement, physician education, and patient-centered care makes him an outstanding addition to our Board.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Esposito and celebrating his commitment to advancing the future of nuclear medicine.

Lionel S. Zuckier, MD, MBA, FRCPC



The ABNM is delighted to welcome Lionel S. Zuckier, MD, MBA, FRCPC, Director of Clinical Theranostics and Professor of Radiology at Columbia University Medical Center and New York-Presbyterian Hospital, to the Board of Directors.

Dr. Zuckier brings more than four decades of experience as a clinician, educator, researcher, and healthcare leader. His educational background reflects a remarkable breadth of expertise, including a degree in Physics from Yeshiva University, an MD from Albert Einstein College of Medicine, specialty training in both Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Radiology, and an MBA from the University of Massachusetts Isenberg School of Management. He holds certification from the American Board of Nuclear Medicine, the American Board of Radiology, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Throughout his career, Dr. Zuckier has served in leadership positions at leading academic institutions across the United States and Canada, including Albert Einstein College of Medicine, the University of Ottawa, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. He has led numerous nuclear medicine divisions, contributed extensively to evidence-based medicine initiatives, and published widely across a broad range of clinical nuclear medicine topics.

An active leader within the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, Dr. Zuckier recently completed a term as President of the General Clinical Nuclear Medicine Council and has chaired multiple national guideline committees. His expertise spans general nuclear medicine, renal imaging, cardiac PET and SPECT imaging, and the rapidly evolving field of theranostics. His exceptional record of leadership, scholarship, and dedication to advancing education and patient care will be a tremendous asset to our Board and organization.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Zuckier as he begins his service on the Board of Directors.

Executive Director's Message

Executive Director's 2026 Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2025

Kirk A. Frey, MD, PhD – *Executive Director, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

Dear ABNM Diplomates,

The ABNM fiscal year is January 1 through December 31. A full audit is conducted every two years by a certified public accounting firm. A less extensive financial review is performed in alternate years. In 2026, ABNM financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2025, were reviewed, and final audit approval is pending. The ABNM has an estimated total assets of $5,062,712 with an increase of $388,019 compared to the prior year, attributable to investment income on reserves.

The United States Income Tax Return, Form 990, filed by all non-profit organizations, is publicly available. The returns filed by the ABNM can be found on the IRS website https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/.

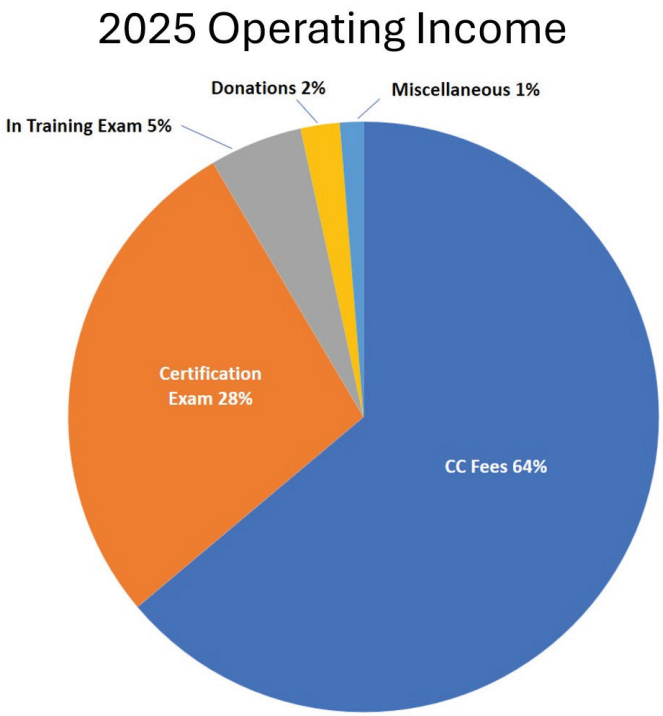
The ABNM started 2025 with a projected budget of $825,031 in operating (non-investment) income. At the end of the year, the estimated operating income was $995,390. Income was above budget primarily due to an increasing number of applications for the Certification Exam and an increase in Continuing Certification dues from ABNM diplomates – likely related to catch-up following temporary unavailability of the ABNM Website in the last quarter of 2024.

The ABNM started 2025 with a projected budget of $899,114 in operating expense. At the end of the year, the estimated actual operating expense was $1,192,743, attributable to increase in cost of living personnel expenses and increased website hosting and maintenance costs.

The ABNM ended 2025 with a net operating income of -$120,229 versus -$122,483 the prior year.

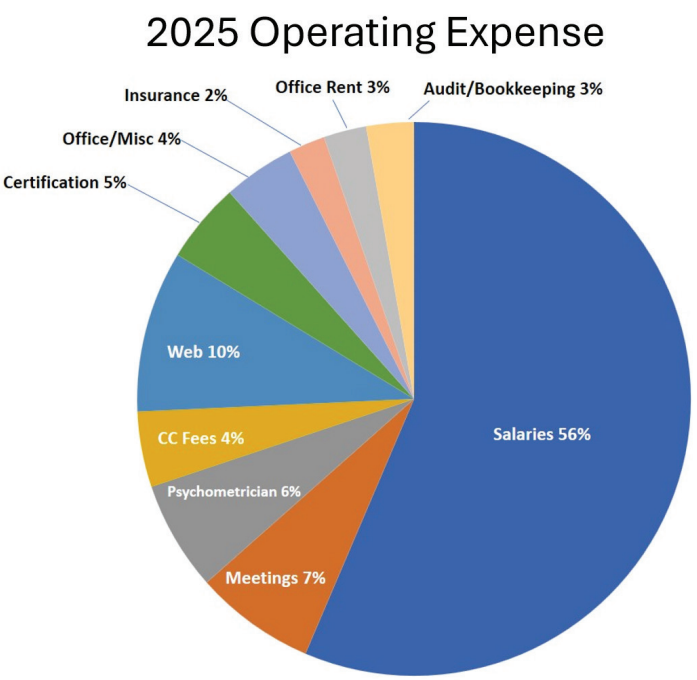
A breakdown of the major income and expense categories for 2025 is shown in the diagrams.

The majority of income (64%) was derived from the Continuing Certification (CC) annual fee. Historically,



the fee was $150 when it was instituted in 2007. It increased to $175 in 2010. The fee was increased to $400 in 2012 to eliminate additional registration fees paid by diplomates for the periodic 10-year CC exam. The CC fees cover annual participation in CertLink as well as the option to take the CC exam (if needed) without additional cost to diplomates. The annual CC fee was increased to $500 in 2019 because inflation made it impossible to maintain a balanced operating budget, despite reducing the ABNM office staff from 4 to 3 full-time employees. Due to a COVID-related decrease in travel and meeting expenses, diplomates received a $50 credit in 2021 through 2024, effectively reducing the annual CC fee to $450. ABNM aims to maintain this reduction through continued efforts to improve operational efficiencies. In the most recent year, ABNM became a direct employer of operational staff, eliminating indirect overhead expenses from prior host Washington University. ABNM is now pursuing increased direct functional access to diplomate data

analyses and overall finances with improved IT tools, with the overall goal of maintaining our infrastructural essential activities without need for personnel expansion. ABNM is additionally exploring possible advantages and improvements to exam item databases through judicious use of AI systems.



The largest expense was salary for five employees (3.5 FTE), including the Executive Director (0.25 FTE), Associate Executive Director (0.25 FTE), Administrator (1.0 FTE), CC and Exam Program Manager (1.0 FTE), and Diplomate Relations and Communications Program Manager (1.0 FTE). Salaries were 56% of total expense in 2025. ABNM operations and exam production is managed by ABNM staff in St. Louis, with input and oversight by directors located throughout the United States and Canada using email and conference calls.

The ABNM has $4.83 million (as of December 31, 2025) in an investment portfolio managed by Wells Fargo Advisors. The investment portfolio is the ABNM's reserve fund for unexpected financial difficulties, as well as major new initiatives. It is the long-range intention of ABNM to employ investment margins arising from the funds to offset potential increases in operating costs. Notably, as of this writing, expense containment has permitted ongoing board operations without the need for this revenue source, despite the substantial inflationary pressures over the past 5 years.

The ABNM has two annual meetings per year. To lower operating expenses related to in-person meetings, the ABNM elected to conduct one in-person meeting and one virtual meeting in 2024 and thereafter. Employing a virtual meeting has supported extension of the annual diplomate CC fee at the reduced rate of $450.



Kirk Frey, MD, PhD
Executive Director

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

A Member Board of the
American Board of Medical Specialties
Higher standards. Better care.™

Associate Executive Director's Message

Why Do We Do Things *This Way? What the 2021 ABMS Standards for Continuing Certification Mean for the ABNM and ABNM Diplomates*

Joanna R. Fair, MD, PhD – *Associate Executive Director, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

In 2021, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) approved new Standards for Continuing Certification (CC). These standards replaced the previous Maintenance of Certification (MOC) standards and established a new framework intended by the ABMS to make continuing certification more relevant, educationally valuable, and aligned with physicians' daily professional activities. These standards went into effect on January 1, 2024.

The ABNM, as an ABMS member board, is required to implement these standards through its Continuing Certification program. The changes impact both the responsibilities of the ABNM and the ongoing requirements of ABNM diplomates.

What the ABNM Must Do:

The ABMS standards place significant responsibilities on its member boards, including the ABNM.

1. Determine Certification Status at Least Every Five Years

The ABNM must determine at intervals no longer than five years whether a diplomate is meeting continuing certification requirements and remains eligible to retain certification. Certification decisions must be based on participation and on meeting performance standards.

To comply with this requirement, beginning in 2025 ABNM certificates became five-year certificates. Diplomates who successfully meet all continuing certification requirements receive a new certificate extending certification for an additional five years.

2. Publicly Report Certification Status

The ABNM must publicly display diplomates' certification status and certification history, including whether a physician is actively participating in continuing certification. Changes in status must be reported transparently.

ABNM fulfills this requirement through reporting certification status to the ABMS Certification Matters website. Diplomates who are current with requirements are designated as "Actively Maintaining Certification."

3. Verify Professional Standing Annually

ABNM must verify diplomates' unrestricted professional licensure annually and monitor actions by licensing authorities that may indicate professional misconduct or threaten patient safety. Boards must have policies and due-process procedures for addressing professionalism concerns.

4. Provide Meaningful Assessment Programs

The ABMS standards require boards to assess knowledge, judgment, and skills while emphasizing formative learning and feedback. Assessment programs should help diplomates remain current with advances in their specialties rather than merely testing knowledge.

ABNM's CertLink® program exemplifies this principle. CertLink provides longitudinal assessment with immediate feedback linked to reference articles, allowing diplomates to learn while demonstrating competence. More than 90% of ABNM diplomates recertify through CertLink rather than by taking a traditional exam. For those who do not participate in or who do not achieve a passing score on CertLink, the ABNM continues to offer a recertification exam each year.

5. Support Continuing Professional Development

The standards require continuing certification programs to reflect principles of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), emphasizing clinically relevant and practice-focused learning.

As a result, ABNM eliminated the previous requirement for eight hours of annual Self-Assessment Module (SAM) credit while maintaining the requirement for continuing medical education. Of note, CME credits do not need to be nuclear-medicine specific. This allows diplomates greater flexibility to pursue education most relevant to their practices.

6. Promote Quality Improvement and Better Health Care

ABMS requires boards to engage diplomates in activities that improve patient care and health systems. The ABNM therefore includes activities related to "Improving Health and Health Care" as a component of continuing certification. Given the variety of settings in which our diplomates practice, the ABNM recognizes multiple activities, including any

activity related to Improvement of Health or Health Care that is approved by the ABNM.

7. Audit and Verify Compliance

Boards must establish mechanisms to verify participation and performance. The ABNM conducts annual attestations and audits approximately 5% of active diplomates each year to ensure compliance with certification requirements.

What Individual ABNM Diplomates Must Do:

While the ABMS standards primarily govern what boards must provide, they also establish expectations for diplomates. ABNM diplomates must complete the following activities each year.

1. Maintain Professional Standing

Diplomates must:

- Maintain an unrestricted medical license in all jurisdictions in which they are licensed.
- Maintain acceptable professional standing.
- Update licensure and professional standing information annually through their ABNM Dashboard (login at www.abnm.org).

Professionalism remains a foundational element of continuing certification under the new standards.

2. Participate in Continuing Professional Development

Diplomates must attest to an average of 25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ per year, averaged over a two-year period.

As noted above, the requirement for specific SAM credits has been removed, and CME credits do not need to be nuclear-medicine specific.

3. Demonstrate Current Knowledge

Diplomates must participate in one of two assessment pathways:

- CertLink® longitudinal assessment, meeting established passing standards; or
- A traditional Continuing Certification exam every five years.

The standards emphasize that physicians have a professional responsibility to stay current in knowledge, judgment, and skills throughout their careers.

4. Participate in Improving Health and Health Care

Diplomates must complete at least one qualifying quality improvement or health care improvement activity annually. This requirement is generally waived for diplomates without clinical responsibilities.

These activities align with the ABMS expectation that physicians contribute to safer, higher-quality, more effective patient care and to ongoing improvement of the systems in which they work.

5. Complete Annual Attestation

Each year diplomates must log into the ABNM website and attest that they have:

- Maintained professional standing.
- Completed the required CME activities.
- Participated in required quality improvement activities.
- Met applicable assessment requirements.

6. Pay Annual Continuing Certification Fees

Diplomates must remain current with annual certification fees to maintain active participation in the program.

7. Respond to Audits When Selected

Approximately 5% of diplomates are audited annually. Physicians selected for audit must provide documentation supporting their CPD activities, preferably through CME transcripts and records covering the required look-back period.

Summary:

The 2021 ABMS Standards transformed continuing certification from a primarily examination-based recertification process into a more comprehensive program emphasizing professionalism, lifelong learning, quality improvement, and continuous engagement in practice-relevant education. These standards, implemented in 2024, have changed the expectations of the ABNM and its diplomates in ensuring and documenting meaningful participation.

You can learn more about the ABMS Standards for Continuing Certification here: https://abms.org/board-certification-standards/standards-for-continuing-certification.

Joanna R. Fair MD PhD

Joanna R. Fair, MD, PhD
Associate Executive Director, ABNM

Communications Committee Chair Message

Building a Stronger ABNM Community Through Communication

Saima Muzahir, MD – *Communications Committee Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

"Great communication begins with connection." – Oprah Winfrey

What makes a professional community strong? Expertise, shared purpose, and mutual support are certainly part of the answer. But there is another essential ingredient: connection. This connection will strengthen not simply by communicating with our diplomates, but by creating more opportunities to communicate with one another. For ABNM, it is more than simply sharing announcements, deadlines, or updates—it is an opportunity to connect with our members, highlight the work being done across our field, and ensure that every diplomate feels informed, included, engaged, and part of the larger ABNM community.

Advances in theranostics, novel radiopharmaceuticals, and artificial intelligence are expanding the scope of our clinical practice while creating new opportunities for education, research, and innovation. During this period of rapid transformation, effective communication with our diplomates is more important than ever. As professional needs evolve and our community becomes increasingly diverse in experience, practice settings, and career goals, clear and consistent communication should reflect that diversity. Fostering a shared vision is essential to preparing our diplomates for the future, reducing uncertainty, and advancing our specialty.

ABNM Tracers and other ABNM communications can serve as platforms to share not only what the Board is doing, but also what matters to you. What topics would you like to see addressed? What questions are you hearing from colleagues? What innovations or accomplishments within our community deserve recognition? Are there resources, educational opportunities, or ABNM initiatives that you would find particularly valuable?

As we look toward the future, I hope ABNM communications will increasingly reflect our collective voice. Whether you have an idea for a newsletter topic, feedback on how we communicate, a story to share, or simply a suggestion for how ABNM can better connect with its members, please reach out (to abnm@abnm.org) as your voice matters the most.

CC Committee Chair Message

The Evolution of CertLink: From Launch to Today

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

For many years, diplomates-maintained board certification through a "high-stakes, low-frequency" system that required a lengthy, day-long exam at a secure testing center. Diplomates often spent months reviewing extensive material to demonstrate competence and maintain certification.

This model became outdated for assessing the competencies needed by modern physicians. The American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM), following updated American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) guidelines, moved away from the 10-year exam for several reasons:

- Medical science, particularly nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, evolves too rapidly to be captured by a 10-year timeline. With the rapid emergence of new radiopharmaceuticals, theranostic protocols, and imaging advancements, a diplomate's knowledge could become outdated long before their decade was completed.
- Educational research shows that high-stress, single-day exams mainly encourage short-term memorization rather than lasting knowledge. In contrast, spaced repetition is more effective for integrating information into clinical practice.
- The 10-year exam often covered topics infrequently encountered in daily clinical practice. Additionally, the previous system required physicians to take multiple days off work and invest significant financial resources in preparatory courses, contributing to increased professional burnout.

The ABNM officially launched the CertLink® pilot project in January 2018, in collaboration with the ABMS, as an alternative to the traditional Maintenance of Certification (MOC) exam, now called the Continuing Certification (CC) exam. Grounded in adult learning theory, CertLink aimed to deliver continuous, incremental education rather than relying on infrequent, intensive study sessions. Instead of a 10-year interval between assessments, diplomates receive high-quality, image-rich, and clinically relevant questions regularly. This approach allows physicians to immediately access detailed explanations and references, transforming a former administrative requirement into an effective tool for identifying and addressing gaps in clinical knowledge.

The pilot phase concluded in 2021 after three years of data collection and evaluation, with overwhelmingly positive results. Due to its proven validity and popularity, the ABNM made CertLink a permanent part of its CC program in 2021. The platform was then expanded to include residents and fellows through CertLink In-Training, which helps them prepare for the certification exam by identifying strengths and weaknesses.

CertLink is now the established standard for diplomate demonstration of current medical knowledge and judgement in nuclear medicine continuing certification. The prior half-day continuing certification examination remains an option for those diplomates not meeting CertLink requirements. Starting in 2025, diplomates began receiving five-year renewal certificates rather than the previous ten-year certificates in compliance with revision of ABMS Standards for Continuing Certification.

Currently, maintaining active certification requires consistent participation through the ABNM CertLink platform. Diplomates must meet CC requirements throughout their five-year cycle to remain publicly listed as "Certified" on the ABMS Certification Matters web portal. Enrollment timelines are now standardized, and all specialists who complete initial certification are automatically transitioned to CertLink. CertLink's evolution from a web-based pilot to the foundation of nuclear medicine competency assessment reflects a broader shift in medicine toward continuous, lifelong learning.



In Memoriam

Twyla Bartel, DO, MBA

Ichi-go ichi-e. For this moment only.

Tracy L. Yarbrough, MD, PhD, MAEd – *American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

On June 15, 2026, Dr. Twyla Smith Bartel passed away, surrounded by her loved ones.

A single moment, one that came far too soon, quietly closed a lifetime of moments—moments of service to her faith, her family, her friends, and to a profession and community she loved deeply.

Ichi-go ichi-e is a Japanese expression often translated as "one time, one meeting"—a reminder that each encounter is singular and should be treasured because it will never occur in precisely the same way again. Whether we realized it or not, Twyla seemed to live this principle. She believed that each of us in the nuclear medicine community was, in some way, her friend. And she approached each encounter as an opportunity: to find common purpose, to recognize what another person brought to the table, and to bring people together toward a shared success.

In a world where so many of us spend our moments trying to prove that we are better than—smarter or more clever, kinder or more giving, faster or more skilled, louder or more accomplished—Twyla Bartel went about simply being better. She made the world a little more loving, more beautiful, more generous, and more inclusive, moment by moment and relationship by relationship. She did so not through boasting or self-promotion, but through a steady, often quiet—and, when the occasion demanded it, wonderfully bold—grace.

It is difficult for me to think of a personal triumph of Twyla's that did not somehow become an opportunity for someone else.

After years as an academic nuclear medicine physician, educator, and leader, Twyla made a decision which was somewhat unconventional at the time--to return to residency to train in diagnostic radiology. It was a decision that broadened her own skillset and opportunities, certainly, but its impact extended far beyond her. Her career, in this way and in so many others, demonstrated what was possible for those willing to take an unconventional path, and she spent the years that followed helping others find paths of their own.

In 2013, as co-founder of Global Advanced Imaging, PLLC, Twyla again turned opportunity outward. At a challenging time for the field, she worked to expand practice opportunities for qualified nuclear medicine physicians while helping bring nuclear medicine expertise to patients and communities where access was limited. She was an unapologetic champion for nuclear medicine as a profession and for nuclear medicine physicians as professionals. For countless colleagues, she was the person willing to make an introduction, open a door, offer advice, make a phone call, or simply say, "I know someone."

And Twyla knew everyone.

But more importantly, she made everyone feel worth knowing.

Her service to nuclear medicine reflected the same instinct. Having trained at the University of Iowa and subsequently serving in leadership roles across many of our field's professional organizations, Twyla devoted seemingly endless energy to education, certification, advocacy, and the future of the specialty. Her contributions to the American Board of Nuclear Medicine were part of a much larger lifetime commitment to ensuring that nuclear medicine remained strong, relevant, and welcoming to those who would carry it forward.

Those of us fortunate enough to know Twyla well also knew that her titles and accomplishments tell only a tiny fraction of her story. Twyla noticed people. She remembered them. She connected them. She saw potential in people that they sometimes had not yet recognized in themselves, and she made sure others knew about that potential. Her focus was rarely on what an opportunity might do for her, but on what might become possible—for a colleague, a trainee, a patient, a profession—if someone simply helped create the opening.

That may be among the most meaningful measures of a life: not simply what we accomplish during the moments we are given, but how many other lives become larger because we were there.

Twyla was not an ordinary nuclear medicine physician—if there is such a thing. She was an extraordinary advocate, educator, colleague, mentor, connector, and friend. She leaves behind a profession stronger for her service and a community filled with people whose careers, opportunities, and lives are different because, at one moment or another, their path crossed hers.

Ichi-go ichi-e.

For this moment only.

We could not have known which conversation would be our last, which meeting would be the final one, or which laugh, phone call, conference hallway conversation, shared meal, or bit of advice would become something we would one day wish we could experience once more.

But Twyla understood something important about moments: you do not have to know a moment is precious to make it matter.

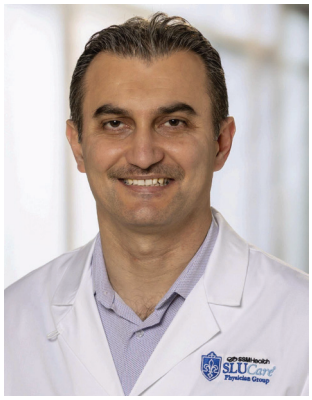
She simply made hers matter.

And, in doing so, she made ours matter too.

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

A Member Board of the
American Board of Medical Specialties
Higher standards. Better care.™

Young Professionals



A New Diplomate's Perspective: Reflections on Achieving ABNM Certification:

Atheel Alsagheer, MD – *Assistant Professor Nuclear Medicine, SSM Health St Louis University*

Nuclear medicine has changed significantly in recent years, predominantly driven by advances in the Theranostic field. These advances caused a paradigm shift in training and, subsequently, the path for certification. This is in addition to the discovery of novel diagnostic agents in neurology, cardiology, and oncology. Achieving certification is not simply an examination of knowledge, but a synthesis of years of clinical experience and technical mastery.

Preparation for the ABNM board is uniquely demanding because it spans a wide intellectual spectrum. Unlike narrower subspecialty exams, the ABNM requires fluency across diagnostic imaging, radiopharmaceutical science, physics, instrumentation, radiation safety, and therapeutic applications. During training, this breadth often feels fragmented, oscillating between PET physics one day and treating a new patient the next. In the final months of preparation, however, a shift occurs. Concepts that once seemed isolated begin to integrate.

Let me share with you the major takeaways from my journey, which I consider somewhat unique, as I finished 3 years of ACGME accredited residency followed by a 1-year non-ACGME accredited PET/CT fellowship. I was fortunate to train in a supportive environment that provided me with a strong foundation. Without this, I could not have achieved my educational goals nor passed the ABNM board exam.

Master the Physics and Basics of technology:

There is no question that the foundation of nuclear medicine is physics and technology. In my first year of residency, I focused on understanding the basics rather than the wording of my dictations. My program director taught me that whenever I was studying a topic, I should go to the technologists and ask them to show me how they acquired it, which helped me tremendously. It allowed me to master the protocols and techniques in clinical practice and not just regurgitate what I read in the textbooks. Therefore, a trainee should always be proactive and not rely on passive learning.

Maximize your Rotations:

Take full advantage of rotations during the academic years. Diagnostic radiology rotations are a must. Body CT and MR are essential to have integrated into any program. A considerable amount of ABNM questions test your diagnostic radiology competency. Looking beyond the exam, some centers now even have PET/MR scanners, so MR rotations alongside CT rotations are valuable in clinical practice as well. In addition, our program director created a unique oncology rotation. I was interested in the rotation and was the first in my program to do so. My experience there helped me better understand the clinical perspective and know what oncologists actually need from our report and impressions to plan their next step in managing patient care. This also assisted my understanding and answering of clinical questions during both training and on the ABNM exam.

Learn Theranostics:

Take all opportunities to be involved in therapies, you have to be actively involved in providing therapies and take all the opportunity to learn and apply your knowledge. Our center became designated as a Comprehensive Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Center of Excellence, and I am proud to be a part of it now. I understand my training was somewhat unique with all Radiopharmaceutical therapies being performed by Nuclear Medicine and not Radiation Oncology. I cannot stress enough about the importance of therapies in the exam and in practice. When transitioning from training and certification to clinical practice, a physician will have to learn how to be independent in the therapeutic approach.

Learn from IR and Surgical Suite:

Example is Y90 therapy and operating room gamma probe lymphoscintigraphy. Go and learn, there is always a nice operator that can open the door for you.

Attend Tumor Boards:

Participate in tumor boards even though you might not be directly involved as a second- or third-year resident. Regular tumor board attendance will broaden your knowledge and tune your diagnostic skills over time. This is one of the few opportunities to be able to learn from multiple different types of clinicians in one setting and understand the mindset to help formulate a concise and relevant report.

Learn new tracers and engage with clinical trials if available:

Our program stands out for the diversity of the clinical trials we are involved with, both qualitatively and quantitatively. In these trials, I was exposed to new radiopharmaceuticals such as alpha-emitters, FAPI ligand tracers, Pb203/212, and more. Working in clinical trials will not only build experience but keep you up to date. By the time you finish residency, you might see some of the tracers you encountered in trials approved for clinical use. I remember when I started residency in 2022 when Lu-177 PSMA (Pluvicto) was just approved for third line therapy for Castrate resistant prostate cancer. I worked in clinical trials to investigate the use of Pluvicto as second- and first-line therapy. By the end of my residency, the FDA approved it as a second line! This made me feel like I had a role in helping advance the scientific community.

Utilize SNMMI Resources

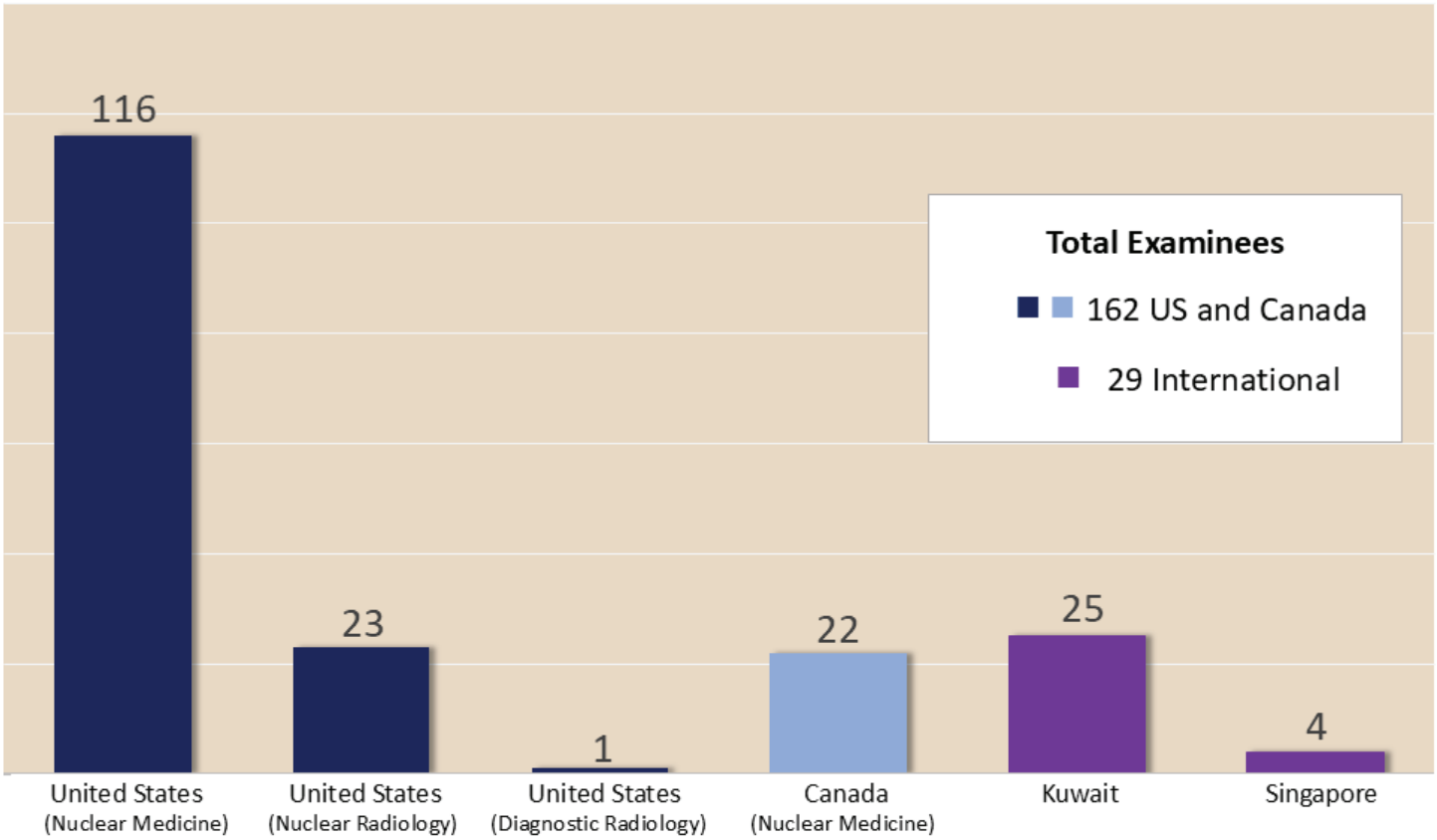
The society website is a wonderful resource. Check it regularly, look for learning webinars and follow the board review lectures as both are great ways to refresh concepts. Participation in the annual meetings over zoom or in person will also provide valuable information and improve practical and theoretical knowledge. Lastly, I recommend trying to write an abstract to submit to the annual SNMMI meeting, even just one during residency. Having your own project is valuable preparation for working independently and becoming involved in academia.

Regardless of how many resources are available to you through your program, always remember that the path to certification is a way to build your professional identity. It requires perseverance, advanced level of training, dedication, years of valuable experience, and genuine passion in the field.

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

A Member Board of the
American Board of Medical Specialties
Higher standards. Better care.™

2026 In-Training (IT) Exam Statistics



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

A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties
Higher standards. Better care.™