Historical Perspective of the ABR

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Trustee – Therapy Medical Physics
Learning Objectives

- To understand the motivation for the development of professional certification.

- To learn about the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

- To learn about the early days of the ABR certification of Medical Physicists.
Early Path to Certification


- American Medical Association (AMA) formed in 1847
  - “to promote the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health”
  - have states develop a licensing requirement to keep nonqualified physicians from practicing
- Federation of State Medical Boards formed in 1912
- by 1915 most states had good licensing schemes
Development of the Certification Board Process

- Movement to insure quality within the medical specialties
- Driven by quality and patient protection
  - Not controlled by AMA
  - Not controlled by specialty societies
  - Independent of state and national government
  - Define skills necessary to practice the specialty
American Board of Ophthalmology was First – 1917
1917

Founding Boards
1933
American Board of Dermatology
American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology
American Board of Ophthalmology
American Board of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery

American Board of Medical Specialties
Development of the ABMS

- Formed in 1933
- To support professional development of physicians by setting standards
- To verify through Board certification that a physician meets these standards
- To provide information to the general public that a physician meets these standards
Development of the ABR

- Arthur C. Christie, President of the ACR, stated the desirability of creating an organization to certify physicians as specialists in Radiology.
- 4 major national radiology societies (ARRS, RSNA, ARS, ACR) and the AMA Section on Radiology sponsored the ABR incorporation in January 1934.
- Primary charge to provide exams and certify physicians as Radiologists.
ABR – MISSION

- ABR mission is to certify that their diplomates demonstrate the requisite knowledge, skill, and understanding of their disciplines to the benefit of patients.
- ABR was founded to protect the public by assessing and certifying doctors who meet specific educational, training, and professional requirements.
Where does MP fit into this?
Original Certification by RSNA – 1934

- Need to certify physicists was seen
  - Critical need for calibration for radiation therapy
    - Teletherapy & Brachytherapy
- Same year ABR was formed
- No AAPM so RSNA undertook the role
- Around 1940 a consensus that certification naturally should be with the ABR
  - WW II delayed things but in 1947 certification was transferred to the ABR
History

In the earliest days physicists were needed for dose calculations in therapy
History

After WW II the availability of radioactive material caused NMP to split off.
History

In the mid-70’s, as both DX and RO became more complex physicists began to specialize in TMP-only or DMP-only
First Medical Physicists certified
November 24, 1947
Certified in ‘Medical Physics’

- P0001: Paul Abersold
- P0002: Karl Morgan
- P0003: Marvin Williams
- P0017: Edith Quimby
ABR certifies

- Diagnostic Radiologists
- Interventional Radiologists
- Medical Physicists
  - Diagnostic Medical Physicists (DMP)
  - Nuclear Medical Physicists (NMP)
  - Therapeutic Medical Physicists (TMP)
- Radiation Oncologists

In Medical Physics
- 80% TMP
- 16% DMP
- 4% NMP
Medical Physics Certificates

- Lifetime <2002
- Time-Limited 2002-2012
- Continuous >2012
Overview and Organization of the ABR
ABR BOG

The Board of Governors (7 to 11 members) is responsible for ABR financial affairs, initial certification and MOC program processes, communications, strategic planning and priority setting, intersociety relations and outreach, and oversight of American Board of Medical Specialty matters.
The Board of Trustees advances the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the ABR’s exams for initial certification and Maintenance of Certification across all disciplines. The Trustees make operational decisions, including exam goals, format, content, quality, assembly, delivery, scoring, and feedback.

- Members of the Board of Trustees have specific specialty and subspecialty expertise, reflecting major areas of current clinical practice.
Physics Trustees – Roles and Responsibilities

▪ Exams
  ✓ Committee operations
  ✓ Blueprints
  ✓ Annual schedule of exam development
  ✓ Oral exam planning

▪ Annual face to face or virtual meetings with other organizations
  ✓ AAPM, SDAMPP, IC Advisory, etc.

▪ Program Quality Improvement
  ✓ Internal (e.g., changes that don’t affect Diplomates, but help ABR operations, committees, etc.), DR Core, DR Cert
  ✓ External (changes that affect Diplomates)
Physics Trustees – Roles and Responsibilities

- Communications
  - Articles – AAPM newsletter, ABR BEAM
  - Presentations: Chapter meetings, RSNA, AAPM meetings, Board meetings
- Review applications for Part 2
- Operational issues (item writing software, modified score sheets)
- Review policies
QUESTIONS?

Please contact an ABR Certification Manager at:

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