

## **Definitions for ABFM, ABMS and AOA**

**American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM)** (Certifying Board for Graduates of ACGME accredited family medicine residency programs; MD and DO) - ABFM is a not-for-profit, private organization whose mission is to improve the health of the public through:

1. Certification: ABFM certifies family physicians who are highly skilled and effective at improving the health of their patients, their families, and their communities, and assists Diplomates in maintaining high professional standards through professional development and lifelong learning.
2. Training Standards: ABFM sets standards for the training that prepares Family Medicine residents for board certification.
3. Research: ABFM funds, conducts, and publishes research that is devoted to creating, evaluating, and maintaining cutting-edge certification methods, and to advancing the scientific basis of Family Medicine.
4. Leadership Development: ABFM cultivates leaders in Family Medicine to expand the specialty's contribution to the health of the public.
5. Collaboration: ABFM collaborates with other specialty boards and organizations to promote better health care, drive better outcomes, and manage health care resources responsibly.

To become certified, residents must pass the Family Medicine Certification Examination. During residency, residents complete self-assessment and quality improvement activities totaling a minimum of 50 points and take an annual in-training examination before taking their examination. They must also possess an active, valid license to practice medicine and obtain a sign off by the program director as having completed all requirements for training and being deemed ready for autonomous practice.

Following residency, physicians participate in continuous certification, which involves maintaining a current, valid, unlimited medical license and remaining in compliance with the ABFM Guidelines for Professionalism, Licensure and Personal Conduct; completing 50-points for each 3-year stage from activities in knowledge self-assessment and performance improvement as well as completing 150 CME credits; taking a periodic, independent examination of their knowledge currency through a one-day exam or participation in Family Medicine Certification Longitudinal Assessment (FMCLA).

URL: <https://www.theabfm.org/>

**American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)** (Governing Organization) - ABMS is a nationally recognized not-for-profit organization that is the “parent” organization for ABFM and the 23 other medical specialty boards. As the leading organization for physician board certification, ABMS serves the public and the medical profession by improving the quality of health care through setting professional standards for certification in partnership with its 24 certifying Member Boards. Through board certification, ABMS helps physicians demonstrate their competence and professionalism, support organizations in achieving their quality improvement and safety goals and offer assurance to the public that they are being cared for by specialists committed to their health and well-being.

URL: <https://www.abms.org/>

**American Board of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ABOFP)** (Certifying Board for Osteopathic Physicians)  
The mission of the ABOFP is to determine the qualifications required of osteopathic family physicians

seeking initial and continued certification awarded by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) in the field of family medicine, develop the methods of examination to assess those family physicians, administer and evaluate examinations to assess competency and excellence in those fields, and issue the appropriate certification upon the approval of the AOA.

To become ABOFP certified, residents must complete the following within six years of finishing residency: 1. Written cognitive exam and 2. OMT Performance Exam (optional, can opt to just become board-certified in Family Medicine). Their continuous certification program includes maintenance of a valid, active medical license; completion of 120 CME credits every three years; completion of one module in continuous quality improvement in the field of Family Medicine (examples include: Medication Safety and Communication Module, Evaluation and Management of Patient with Hypertension Module). Historically this included taking an examination for knowledge currency every eight years, but ABOFP has now also moved to a longitudinal examination process to fulfill this component.

URL: <https://osteopathic.org/>