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March 11, 2019

Dr. Jennifer McCallister, President  
Association of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Program Directors  
2506 North Clark, Suite 431  
Chicago, IL 60614

Dear Dr. McCallister:

The American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Boards seek your input about a potential change to the sequence of certification examinations for certification in Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine resulting from satisfactory completion of a combined Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine fellowship.

Currently, fellows completing three years of accredited combined pulmonary disease and critical care medicine training must take and pass the Pulmonary Disease Certification Examination before being able to apply to the Critical Care Medicine Certification Examination. While most fellows do follow this sequence, a small number of trainees do not take or do not pass the Pulmonary Disease Certification Examination as soon as they are eligible. Fellows affected by this rule have reached out to ABIM, asking for a reconsideration of the policy, so that they can pursue Critical Care Medicine certification and Pulmonary Disease certification simultaneously. By way of context, for those who train in separate, distinct, fellowships combining Critical Care Medicine and another subspecialty, including Pulmonary Disease fellowship, certification can be obtained in any sequence without requiring an underlying subspecialty certification to precede Critical Care Medicine certification. Similarly, for training in other combined fellowships, like Hematology/Oncology fellowship, the trainee can choose the sequence of certification in either discipline.

Thus, the Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Board jointly propose the following change to the policies for [dual certification in Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine](#):

- Remove the requirement for having Pulmonary Disease certification prior to applying for admission to the Critical Care Medicine Examination

- Allow trainees to take both the Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine Certification Examinations after their final year of combined training

**On behalf of your organization and your membership, we respectfully request your input on the following questions:**

- (1) Does your organization support the above changes? Please elaborate on why you are responding “yes” or “no”.**
- (2) What benefits or unintended outcomes would you anticipate should the examination sequence for dual certification in Pulmonary Disease and Critical Care Medicine change?**

We extend our thanks to you for thinking through these questions, and for sharing your point of view. We also plan to survey program directors of combined pulmonary disease/critical care medicine fellowships, and standalone critical care medicine fellowship programs.

Please send your questions, comments or responses to Ms. Anamika Gavhane via email to [agavhane@abim.org](mailto:agavhane@abim.org). We appreciate your thoughtful and timely replies on or prior to **April 18th**.

Kind regards,



Serpil Erzurum, MD  
Chair, ABIM Pulmonary Disease  
Board



J. Christopher Farmer, MD  
Chair, ABIM Critical Care Medicine  
Board

Cc: Ms. Joyce Reitzner, MBA, MIPH