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August 4, 2020

Regarding: APC Support of Participation in Continuing Certification by Non-Time Limited Diplomates of the American Board of Pathology (ABPath)

Dear Dr. Howell (Lydia),
Congratulations on the recent very successful APC/PRODS virtual meeting!

We are writing to request APC to consider asking Chairs to support participation of their non-time limited (NTL) ABPath certified pathologists in Continuing Certification (CC).

The advantages of doing so are many. Briefly:

- 1) Demonstrate commitment to continuous learning
 - a. This is an important goal of the ABMS “Vision for the Future” Report. <https://visioninitiative.org/commission/final-report/>
 - b. ABPath CertLink® (ABPCL) is an online longitudinal assessment designed to support continuous learning and professional development. ABPath has been approved by ABMS to replace the current 10-year high stakes recertification exam by the CertLink Program in 2021. The CertLink Pilot was very successful and it is an excellent platform that allows pathologists to gauge their level “of learning” and supports “for learning” by providing a critique and references that explain why the correct answer is correct and why the other distractors are not. There are 31 practice areas to choose from, so participants can customize the questions to their own practice. There are many other unique features of the program that participants have found to be “helpful”, “fun” and non-burdensome. <https://www.abpath.org/index.php/abpath-certlink>
- 2) Provide solidarity with time-limited certificate holders
 - a. We have ABPath Advisory Committees, composed of “new in practice” and “resident/fellow” members. The common feedback we hear is “why should pathologists certified before 2006, not be held to the same standard of continuous learning and improvement in practice”

3) Other Significant Considerations

- a. Participation in CC does not jeopardize non-time limited certifications, regardless of performance on CertLink.
- b. 15 practice relevant questions are provided per quarter in ABPCL and CME credit is available for participation
- c. Currently the ABPath is not charging NTL pathologists for participation in ABPCL.

So, the key question is WHY NOT PARTICIPATE?

As a Cooperating Society of the American Board of Pathology, we hope the APC will demonstrate leadership of our profession and consider this request. Please share this request with the APC Council and the APC/PRODS list serve.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Ritu Nayar in black ink.

Ritu Nayar, MD; ABPath Trustee and Chair, ABPath Continuing Certification Committee

Handwritten signature of Rebecca L. Johnson in black ink.

Rebecca L. Johnson, MD, Chief Executive Officer

Sent by email.

**ABPath responses to APC Council's request for clarification on
Continuing Certification by Non-Time Limited Diplomates
October 2020**

- 1. While participation is tracked on the ABMS website, are individual scores also tracked? If so, what are the consequences or vulnerabilities of storing that data for participants?**

The ABPath has never reported scores for the Continuing Certification examination, always just pass/fail. Beginning in 2021, ABPath will no longer offer an examination except to diplomates who did not participate in the CertLink longitudinal assessment pilot and diplomates who need an examination for medical licensure.

- 2. Will the program continue to develop? While the ABPath CertLink structure is established, more work is needed to develop more questions.**

Yes, we continually look for ways to improve the CC Program. For example, in 2021 SAMs and a Patient Safety course will no longer be required. Beginning in 2021, CertLink will be a permanent change to the CC program and no longer a pilot. It is a "mature" product. We have a large cadre of volunteer item writers for CertLink.

- 3. For state licensure renewals, "recertification" is not necessarily needed, but rather CME credit is. At present, the program does not offer CME, which could motivate more participation. Similarly, while not finalized yet, will this Continuing Certification program replace Self-Assessment Module (SAMs) credit?**

We do offer CME in partnership with ASCP. SAMs requirement goes away in 2021.