

# ABIM ADVANCED HEART FAILURE AND TRANSPLANT CARDIOLOGY CERTIFICATION

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Certification in Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology, developed by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) for diplomates holding ABIM Certification in Cardiovascular Disease, is designed to recognize the qualifications of physicians who have met ABIM's standards for specialists in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology.

For the first three examinations to be given in 2010, 2012, and 2014, there are two pathways for exam admission:

**The Training Pathway:** This is a permanent pathway for those who have had formal fellowship training in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology in addition to three years of accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship training. Whether or not the advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training is required to be accredited by ACGME depends on the year the training was undertaken.

**The Practice Pathway:** This is a temporary pathway for those who have had no formal advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training but have had acceptable practice experience. This pathway is intended for established practitioners in the field who have not had the opportunity to complete formal fellowship training. It is not intended for current or recent trainees. Those who complete cardiovascular disease fellowship after June 30, 2011 *cannot* apply through this pathway because it requires a minimum of three years of practice experience.

### 1 **What pathway do I select if I am completing my advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship from July 2009 to June 2010 and have not yet started my three years of cardiology fellowship training?**

ABIM has no policy about sequence of training. However, in order to be eligible to apply for admission to the ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Examination, physicians must hold a current ABIM Certification in Cardiovascular Disease.

The Training Pathway for admission to the examination is a four-year pathway consisting of 36 months of accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship training, including 24 months of clinical training, and an additional 12 months of acceptable advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology training.

In the scenario above, all four years of fellowship training must be satisfactorily completed before candidates are eligible to apply for admission to the Cardiovascular Disease Certification Examination, and they must achieve certification in Cardiovascular Disease, in order to be eligible to apply for the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination. Therefore, the two examinations cannot be undertaken in the same year.

### 2 **Are advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology programs going to be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)? When will ABIM require ACGME accredited training?**

The ACGME is beginning the process of accrediting advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology programs. ABIM will begin requiring ACGME-accredited training when the majority of programs have been accredited. Currently it is anticipated that training undertaken July 1, 2012 and after will need to be ACGME-accredited. However, that date may be changed if the majority of programs have not been accredited by that time.

**3 How will I know if my advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology training will qualify me for admission to the examination through the Training Pathway?**

It depends on the year that you trained. Currently, it is anticipated that training undertaken July 1, 2012 and thereafter will need to be ACGME-accredited. Training undertaken prior to July 1, 2012 will be acceptable provided it is conducted within an institution that has a cardiovascular disease fellowship program that is accredited by the ACGME, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or the Professional Corporation of Physicians of Quebec.

**4 Will the Training Pathway always be an option for admission to the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination?**

Yes. The Training Pathway is a permanent pathway for admission to the examination. It is a four-year pathway consisting of 36 months of accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship training, including 24 months of clinical training, and 12 months of acceptable advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training. All first-time applicants for examinations given after 2014 must fulfill the requirements of the four-year Training Pathway.

**5 What about grandfathering and Practice Pathways?**

Everyone will have to take and pass the examination in order to be certified. However, if “grandfathering” refers to “being admitted to examination without having completed formal fellowship training in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology,” ABIM offers Practice Pathways for admission to the first three examinations to be given in 2010, 2012, and 2014. They require that candidates demonstrate that – for three of the past five years, including the year prior to application for examination – they spent either 40% of their post-training clinical practice time or 25% of their total professional time in the discipline of advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology. If physicians are admitted to the examination through the Practice Pathways and fail the examination, they can continue to take the examination in the future under ABIM’s Re-Examination Policy, even after Practice Pathways have been discontinued.

**6 I am currently undertaking 36 months of accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship training. Will I be eligible to apply for the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination through the Practice Pathway, or will I need to complete a fourth year of fellowship training in advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology?**

Since the Practice Pathways require a minimum of three years of post-training practice experience, only those leaving cardiovascular disease fellowship training before July 1, 2011, will be able to apply for the examination through the Practice Pathways. Those who leave training after July 1, 2011 will need to fulfill the requirements of the four-year Training Pathway. For the first three examinations the following rules apply:

- 2010 - must have left training by July 1, 2007 to apply through Practice Pathway
- 2012 - must have left training by July 1, 2009 to apply through Practice Pathway
- 2014 - must have left training by July 1, 2011 to apply through Practice Pathway

**7 I was granted 12 months of credit as an exception by ABIM for my 12 months of advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology toward the 36-month training requirement for admission to the Cardiovascular Disease Certification Examination. Can I apply for the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination through the Training Pathway with 24 months of accredited clinical cardiovascular disease fellowship training and my 12 months of advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training?**

No. You cannot double-count the advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training toward the training requirements for admission to both examinations. To qualify for the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination through the Training Pathway, you would need to complete an additional 12 months (a fourth year) of advanced heart failure and transplant cardiology fellowship training. If you complete your 36 months of fellowship training before July 1, 2011 and meet the percentage of practice requirements, you might be able to qualify for the 2014 examination through the Practice Pathway. If your 36 months of fellowship training are completed after July 1, 2011, you will need to fulfill the requirements of the four-year Training Pathway.

**8 Will DOs be eligible to take the examination?**

DO's who have completed both ACGME-accredited internal medicine residency training and ACGME-accredited cardiovascular disease fellowship training and have been certified in Internal Medicine by ABIM and are currently certified in Cardiovascular Disease by ABIM will be eligible to apply for admission to the ABIM Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination.

**9 What is the date of the Fall 2010 Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination, and how do I register for the examination?**

Registration for the November 8, 2010 Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination will be available online via [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org) (Physician Login) from March 1, 2010 through May 1, 2010. Late fee registration is May 2 – June 1, 2010.

The 2010 examination fee is \$2,650.00 and the late fee is \$400.

**10 How do I find out what type of information will be included in the examination? What is the format of the examination?**

The Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification Examination will be a computer-based examination administered by Pearson VUE Professional Centers, which has test centers throughout the United States and abroad. It will consist of four separate sections of two hours each with optional breaks between sections.

When the examination blueprint has been finalized it will be posted on the ABIM website under [www.abim.org/exam/cert/ahftc.aspx](http://www.abim.org/exam/cert/ahftc.aspx).

**11 Will recertification be required to maintain the Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology Certification?**

All certificates issued by ABIM in and after 1990 must be renewed through the ABIM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. MOC requirements for Advanced Heart Failure and Transplant Cardiology will be posted on ABIM's website in the future as those requirements are established.

## 12 Who should I contact for more information?

You should contact ABIM staff directly at the address and contact information below:

American Board of Internal Medicine  
510 Walnut Street, Suite 1700  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

*Anamika Gavhane, Senior Credentials Administrator*  
215-606-4112 or 800-441-2246 Ext. 4112  
[agavhane@abim.org](mailto:agavhane@abim.org)

*Joan Otto, Senior Credentials Manager*  
215-446-3573 or 800-441-2246 Ext. 3573  
[jotto@abim.org](mailto:jotto@abim.org)

[www.abim.org/specialty/ahftc.aspx](http://www.abim.org/specialty/ahftc.aspx)