



ABNS Purpose Statement

The ABNS determines neurosurgical educational requirements, certifies neurosurgeons, certifies selected neurosurgical fellows and promotes lifelong learning. We work continuously with the ACGME to ensure that training requirements are contemporary and produce safe practitioners with experience across a broad spectrum of neurological surgery practice. Similarly, we are continuously evaluating and refining our processes for initial certification and lifelong learning to promote fairness and relevance. Recent modifications include (a) obtaining more relevant patient information in candidate case logs, including imaging, to help better evaluate the current practice of candidates applying for certification; (b) modifying the oral exam to include more questions that are relevant to the candidate's practice; and (c) making the lifelong learning requirements less onerous and more valuable to Diplomates, such offering an Adaptive Learning Tool and Modules as a replacement for the once a decade high stakes exam. The learning tool and modules provide valuable up-to-date information on meaningful developments. By completing these learning activities not only offers CME credits, it replaces the need for trauma specific CME for those covering level I trauma centers.

The ABNS also monitors actions against Diplomates, including actions against state licenses. The ABNS disciplines Diplomates where appropriate in order to ensure that the credential remains meaningful and is held only by neurological surgeons in good standing. The ABNS has an Ethics Code for neurological surgeons to guide them in their practice.

In addition, and significantly, the ABNS represents the profession of neurosurgery to authorities and societies involved with education, certification and licensing. Recently, the ABNS was instrumental in obtaining "Recognition of Focused Practice" for neurological surgeons in certain sub-specialties who meet certain requirements. The ABNS also provides apolitical input to neurosurgery professional societies and other organizations nationally to represent the best interests of our profession and patients.

There has been recent concern voiced about certain specialty boards paying huge salaries to their administrative staff and otherwise spending lavishly. Please note that the ABNS is a tax exempt, not-for-profit organization and acts as such. All ABNS Directors serve as volunteers, are not compensated for their ABNS activities and typically devote hundreds of hours each year to their duties. The current ABNS Executive Director does not receive any salary or compensation for his time and services, which are significant. The ABNS Administrative Staff is comprised by a very small number of staffs; five employees whose salaries are benchmarked against industry standards and who collectively serve thousands of candidates and Diplomates. ABNS dues and fees are set at a level intended to generally cover operating costs in any year – the ABNS does prudently retain a "rainy day" reserve equal to about one year of expenses, but the amount of that reserve goes up and down depending on the investment market. The ABNS does not use payment of dues or fees to increase the size of that reserve.

The ABNS relies on the annual dues support from its Diplomates to provide its many services in support of maintaining and constantly improving ABNS Certification as a meaningful and valuable, "gold standard" to the benefit of the individual neurosurgeon, the profession and the public. We cannot long remain in business without this support. Consequently, the receipt of the ABNS annual dues is a prerequisite for Diplomates to be listed on the ABNS website as a "Certified" neurological surgeon, and for receiving the many other services that the ABNS proudly provides.