



AMERICAN BOARD OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

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Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Oral Certifying Exam Candidates October 2020 Exam Cancellation Notice on July 2, 2020

Dear Oral Certifying Exam Candidate for primary certification in
Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery:

The American Board of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (ABOHNS) has, along with the global health care community, continued to monitor and track the trajectory of the new Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) pandemic as it has spread throughout the nation and the world. And, while some areas of the country have made progress in containing the spread of the virus, it remains a serious health care threat and concern for all.

The health and well-being of you, our candidates, your colleagues and our staff is of the utmost importance to us at ABOHNS. We understand that many of you have been called to the front lines to battle this virus, and we appreciate your dedication and service to your patients and communities, while hoping you and your families remain safe.

Earlier in March we postponed our scheduled in-person oral examinations for October. Unfortunately, the continued level of COVID-19 infection, ongoing community spread, and the potential risk it offers given how the exam is administered has caused us to make the difficult, but necessary decision to cancel the October in-person oral exams. This decision is based primarily on protecting our candidates, examiners, and staff, being socially responsible, and following the recommendations and guidelines established by the infectious disease experts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

The ABOHNS is working diligently to develop an alternative plan to conduct the oral exam using a remote format. This summer, we will be developing a virtual exam format and plan to administer the first virtual oral exam in October or November to our Neurotology subspecialty candidates. The goal is to create a virtual approach that avoids close contact with large groups and maintains the security and integrity of the examination. We will use that same format to administer the Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery oral certifying exam and are currently working toward a January 2021 tentative date.

As we move forward with the development of the virtual oral exam, we want to share the following specifics regarding the examination process, scheduling

and technology requirements, as well as address your questions regarding board eligibility, potential deferment and next steps.

Examination Process, Scheduling and Test Environment Requirements

The virtual meeting platform ABOHNS is exploring will allow for interaction with examiners using a videoconferencing platform. The essential components of the oral examination will remain the same in the virtual environment as the in-person format and will offer the same protocol structure, number of protocols, scoring methodology, and presentation of visuals.

Closer to the exam date, candidates will be asked to complete an updated exam scheduling preference form to obtain their exam assignment times. To ensure a quality, virtual experience, we will share, at a later date, detailed, minimum information technology requirements including the need for a distraction free, quiet room, reliable internet connection, computer, camera and audio needs.

Board Eligibility and Credentialing

Board eligibility periods have been extended by one year for all candidates who were scheduled to take the 2020 Oral Certifying Exam. Candidates may need to undergo recredentialing prior to the administration of the exam due to the length of time since this process was last completed. For example, this process may include re-attestation of state medical board status and acknowledgement of the ABOHNS application agreement form.

Deferment

We understand that some candidates may wish or need to defer from taking the virtual oral exam and prefer to wait until the next in-person examination. You will have the opportunity to request a deferral at no additional cost. While it is uncertain when an in-person format will be viable from a public health perspective, the ABOHNS will extend a candidate's eligibility for one (1) additional year and revisit the available oral exam format options at a later date.

Moving the oral examination to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic is a major undertaking, but we recognize the importance and value you place on obtaining your certification as soon as possible. We look forward to your feedback as we navigate through development and implementation of a virtual format for the upcoming exam. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to develop this innovative approach over the summer and will keep you apprised of our progress as updates become available.

Meanwhile, we remain committed to serving the public and the profession, providing board certification to physicians who meet the highest standards of care. We are also steadfast in our commitment to assist you as you navigate in this unprecedented time, and encourage those needing assistance to contact Rosa La Neve (Certification Coordinator), RML@ABOHNS.ORG.

On behalf of all of us at ABOHNS we thank you for your patience and understanding and hope that you, your colleagues and your families remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Brian Nussenbaum, MD, MHCM
Executive Director