American Board of Otolaryngology Mission Statement

The mission of the American Board of Otolaryngology (ABOto) is to assure the public that, via its process of certification and lifelong maintenance of certification, its diplomates have met the ABOto’s professional standards of training and knowledge in otolaryngology - head and neck surgery.

The ABOto’s fiduciary responsibility is to the public. Although the ABOto carefully considers the concerns of and impact on our diplomats, it is what is in the public’s best interest that guides the ABOto’s decision

Significance of Board Certification

While licensure by the individual states sets the minimum competency requirements to practice medicine, it is not specialty specific. Board certification is a voluntary program in which specialists seek to improve their performance and demonstrate a commitment to their profession. Board certified otolaryngologists must meet the ABOto training requirements, pass psychometrically validated examinations, and participate in Maintenance of Certification.

The ABOto views certification as not just passing the examinations, but a continuum beginning with entry into training and ends with retirement. To be eligible to take the certification examinations, candidates must be registered with the ABOto Resident Registry by their Program Director at the beginning of their training which includes verification of graduation from medical school. The Program Director provides the ABOto with an annual evaluation of each resident and determines whether the resident should receive credit for completion of that year of training. Applicants are required to have completed an ACGME-accredited residency and receive approval from their Program Director to sit for the examinations. The online application process must be completed by the appropriate deadlines which allows time for the information to be verified.
Important 2018/2019 Dates

**July**
- Resident Registry Due - July 13, 2018

**September**
- OTE Test Site and Candidate Applications Available - September 3, 2018
- Written Qualifying Exam - September 24, 2018
- Core Surgical Skills Updated throughout the year as competency is obtained.

**November**
- OTE Test Site and Candidate Applications Due - November 2, 2018

**March**
- Application for Certification Exam Available March 1, 2018
- OTE (In-Service) Exam – March 2, 2019

**April**
- Oral Exam -April 13-14, 2019

**May**
- Written Exam Application Due - May 1, 2018
- OTE Exam Scores Released - May 9, 2018
- Core Surgical Skills Updated throughout the year as competency is obtained

American Board of Otolaryngology Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Duties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brian Nussenbaum, MD, MHCM, FACS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Primary contact for questions regarding Maintenance of Certification &amp; CertLink</td>
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<td>Primary contact for questions relating to the application for the Written Qualifying and Oral Certifying Exam, and Neurotology and Sleep Medicine Subspecialty Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:bkb@aboto.org">bkb@aboto.org</a></td>
<td>Primary contact for questions relating to the application for the Written Qualifying and Oral Certifying Exam, and Neurotology and Sleep Medicine Subspecialty Exams</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Primary contact for exam content &amp; questions about certificate orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Primary contact for annual dues, verification requests, lost passwords &amp; online database access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everett Smith, PhD*</td>
<td>Psychometrician</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exam scoring / evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McVisk, JD*</td>
<td>Legal Counsel</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. **Resident Registry** - Program Directors must register their residents with the ABOto via the ABOto website when a new resident enters the program by July 13th of every year. Most residents will be registered as PGY 1s, but residents entering your program at higher levels must also be registered with the ABOto. Demographic information about the residents is collected at this time. The Program Director also completes an annual evaluation on each resident and determines if the resident is making satisfactory progress academically, surgically, and professionally using the Resident Registry.

Program Coordinators are supplied with a user ID and password to gain access to the program’s online profile. The Coordinator’s access is limited to entry of new residents, OTE applications, and address changes. Core Surgical Procedure updates can be entered by the Program Coordinator; however, the Program Directors should approve these updates. Program Directors are required to completed resident evaluations and attestation of graduating resident training.

When residents are first registered with the ABOto, they are sent a user ID and a password which grants access to a personalized web-page on the ABOto server.

The resident’s web-page provides a variety of information including items that need the residents’ attention during the various phases of training. The resident can change personal information, apply for exams, and perform other activities from the web-page. The ABOto now communicates exclusively by email, so it is critical that we have accurate email address on all residents. It is the residents’ responsibility to update the email address if it changes.

2. **Core Surgical Procedures** - The ABOto and the RRC for Otolaryngology have identified certain procedures termed core surgical skills. Residents should be evaluated by the faculty and when a resident reaches competency in a core procedure, the Program Director will indicate this achievement and the PGY year competency was obtained on the residents evaluation form on the ABOto website.

**Definition of Surgical Competency:** The ability to perform an operation well without guidance or direction on a typical patient.

3. **Otolaryngology Training Examination (In-Service Exam)** - the ABOto prepares, distributes, and scores the OTE for the purpose of providing feedback to residents and Program Directors. The examination results should be used by the Program Director and residents to determine areas of individual and program strengths and weaknesses. The ABOto policy is that the OTE should not be the sole measure of a resident’s performance for the purposes of punitive action such as probation or advancement.

The OTE results are released within 9 weeks of the exam date. After logging-in to your ABOto profile, select “Download Resident OTE Test Results”. From here you can choose from which year you wish to see results.

**Written and Oral Certification Exams** - To obtain your program’s 5-year summary, log-in to your ABOto profile and select “Residency Performance Summary.” From here you can select which 5 year report you wish to see. This report will tell you when the resident graduated and when they were certified.

✴ Be sure to review the “Understanding Your Score Report” on our website.
Program Director & Coordinator Activities  Cont’d From Pg. 3

3. **Otolaryngology Training Examination (In-Service Exam) Continued** - The application process for this exam is done via the ABOto online system. Based on resident names submitted during the Resident Registry process, an application record is generated for each resident in training (PGY 1 – PGY5). The program director or coordinator then chooses which of their residents will take the exam. In order to sign-up all residents for the OTE, it is very important that ALL residents are registered with the ABOto during the Resident Registry.

4. **Written Examination** - Starting in the fall of 2011, the ABOto administered the Written Examination via Pearson Vue computerized testing centers throughout the United States and foreign sites. The Written Examination is a qualifying examination, meaning that in order for a candidate to advance to the oral certifying exam, the candidate must achieve a passing score on the Written Examination. Residents apply for the qualifying & certification examinations by **May 1st** of their Chief Year of residency.

   Much of the online application is already populated with information from the Resident Registry, but residents are required to answer certain questions and provide additional information as needed. **ALL applicants must possess a full and unrestricted medical license by November 15, 2018.** Therefore, we strongly urge all 2018 graduating residents planning to apply for the fall 2018 exam to start the process for obtaining a full and unrestricted medical license.

5. **Oral Examination** - The ABOto prepares and administers the Oral Examination in Chicago once a year. The Oral Examination is the certifying examination. If the candidate passes the Written and Oral Examinations (which are scored separately), then he/she is certified and receives a certificate which expires in ten years. ABOto certified otolaryngologists are referred to as diplomates.

6. **Neurotology Sub-Certification** - Diplomates of the ABOto are sub-certified in Neurotology if they pass the Neurotology oral examination administered every other year in Chicago.

7. **Sleep Medicine Sub-Certification** - Diplomates are sub-certified in Sleep Medicine if they pass the computer based examination administered in several locations every other year. This certification is administered with four other ABMS boards (Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry/Neurology, Family Medicine, and Anesthesiology).

**Your ABOto Webpage**

As a Program Director or Coordinator, you have been issued a user ID and a password which will grant you access to your personalized profile on the ABOto server. The first time you login, you will be asked to change your password.

Your profile will provide you with a variety of information including items that need your attention throughout the year. You can change your personal information, register your residents for exams, make payments, view scores, and perform other activities from your webpage. The ABOto now communicates exclusively by email, so it is critical that we have your accurate email address. If your email changes, this will change both your username and password. **It is your responsibility to update your email address if it changes.**
Leaves of Absence

Leaves of absence and vacation may be granted to residents at the discretion of the Program Director in accordance with local rules. The total of such leaves and vacation may not exceed six weeks in any one year. If a circumstance occurs in which a resident’s absence exceeds the six weeks per year outlined by the ABOto, the program director must submit a plan to the ABOto for approval on how the training will be made up which may require an extension of the residency.

Transfers to a Different Otolaryngology Residency

Occasionally, a resident will transfer from one otolaryngology training program to another. It is important that all parties (the two Program Directors and the transferring resident) meet the requirements established in the ABOto transfer policy which is outlined in the booklet of information available on the ABOto website.
Transcript

The ABOto verifies medical degrees conferred by U.S. medical schools via the American Association of Medical Colleges. All international medical school graduates must request their medical school send an official certified transcript to the ABOto by September 1st of the first year of otolaryngology training. The transcript must show the degree and date conferred. If the transcript is in a language other than English, the resident will subsequently be billed for translation expenses incurred by the ABOto.

Other Board Activities

1. **Maintenance of Certification** - MOC is a quality improvement program developed by all ABMS boards to enhance the quality of medicine practiced. There are four components to MOC which are discussed in detail under Maintenance of Certification in this document.

2. **Certification Verification** - The ABOto provides written verification of certification to health plans, hospitals, and others for a fee. The public can determine if an otolaryngologist is certified at no charge by visiting the website.

3. **Protection of Certificate Value** - Occasionally, a diplomate may have difficulty obtaining privileges for procedures that are in the realm of otolaryngology - head and neck surgery. The ABOto provides information to the appropriate parties to educate them on the spectrum of otolaryngology training and the areas included in the examinations.

History of the ABOto

(adapted from the “American Board of Otolaryngology 1924-1999” by Robert W. Cantrell, MD and Jerome C. Goldstein, MD)

The first formal proposal for a standardized, prescribed post-graduate period of medical education was made at the 1912 meeting of the Triological Society and published in the Laryngoscope in 1913. The American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology (the two academies formally separated in the late 1977) embraced this initiative by establishing two committees to explore this concept and develop a plan. The otolaryngology committee consisted of representatives from the Academy, the American Laryngological Association, the American Otological Society, the AMA Section on Otolaryngology, and the Triological Society. The committee established, not without controversy, a recommended curriculum of training that should last three years, if possible. The ABOto accredited otolaryngology residencies until 1953 when the Residency Review Committee of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education assumed this responsibility.

Under pressure from the Academy, the ABOto was constituted in 1924 to develop a certifying examination, the first of which was administered in 1926. The certifying examination has evolved over the years from its original oral examination and a written histopathology examination. For several years, actual patients with otolaryngological conditions were used in various sites around the country in the “practical exam”. The current format of a multiple choice written and a structured oral examination was established in the 1970s, but has been significantly refined over the past thirty years.
Related Organizations

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is the umbrella organization of the 24 medical specialty boards. It meets formally twice a year to which the President, President-elect, and the Executive Director attend. In addition, the ABMS Board of Directors meets approximately 3 other times per year which the Executive Director attends. The ABMS has the overall responsibility for the Maintenance of Certification program, and is very active in the national healthcare quality improvement movement.

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) accredits residency training programs. The ACGME evaluates residency programs through Residency Review Committees (RRC) for each specialty. The Otolaryngology RRC consists of nine members with three representatives each from the American College of Surgeons, the AMA, and the ABOTO. The ABOTO Executive Director is an ex officio member. The RRC meets twice a year. Completion of an ACGME-accredited residency is required to be eligible for certification by the ABOTO.

The processes for ACGME accreditation and renewal of accreditation require a great deal of work by the Program Director and faculty. The accreditation process begins with completion of the Program Information Form (PIF) which is submitted to the RRC. A site visitor will come to the program and meet with the Program Director, faculty, various medical school staff, and the residents in a variety of meetings. The RRC meets twice a year and reviews the PIF and the site visitor’s report, and will determine if the program meets the requirements for accreditation. The RRC can put a program on probation if it feels the program needs significant improvement, or the RRC may suspend accreditation of a program for severe deficiencies. Depending on how comfortable the RRC is with the program’s performance, the program can be accredited for one to six years at which time it will have to participate in another accreditation process. Citations are frequently included in the report to the Program Director and institution that identify areas that need attention.

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery is a membership organization based in Alexandria, Virginia. In addition to its educational activities such as its annual meeting and learning material, it also advocates for a variety of issues for otolaryngologists. Some otolaryngologists confuse the ABOTO and the AAO-HNS, but their functions are quite separate and distinct.

The Federations of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is the umbrella organization for all of the state licensing and regulatory boards and is based in Dallas, Texas.

The ABOTO supplies administrative support to the Otolaryngology Program Directors Association (OPDO) which meets in conjunction with the SUO-HNS. The Program Coordinators group also meets at the SUO-HNS meeting.
Maintenance of Certification

Maintenance of Certification is a continuing education and quality improvement program in which all the ABMS boards participate, and is the boards’ response to the very active and prominent national healthcare quality movement. The main purpose of the ten year MOC cycle is to improve patient care provided by physicians after residency and fellowship and fills a void in the certification continuum. MOC is a program in evolution and changes have already been made in the ABOto MOC program since its implementation in 2002. All ABOto diplomates certified or sub-certified in 2002 and thereafter are required to participate in MOC. All ABOto Directors voluntarily participate in MOC.

Booklet of Information

The Booklet of information is the legal document that contains official ABOto information and polices, and is updated annually. By policy, the version of the Booklet of Information that is in effect when a resident enters otolaryngology training sets the policies that will apply to that resident. The most current Booklet of Information is available on the ABOto website http://www.aboto.org/BOI.htm.

Yearly ABOto Fees

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Dues for Lifetime Certified Diplomates</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTE Site Fee</td>
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<td>OTE Candidate</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTE Candidate Late Fee</td>
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<td>OTE Site Late Fee</td>
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<td>Annual MOC Exam</td>
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