



AMERICAN BOARD OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

Serving the Public and the Profession since 1924

5615 KIRBY DRIVE, SUITE 600 • HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005-2444

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

JOHN S. RHEE, MD, MPH
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

PRESIDENT-ELECT

RAMON M. ESCLAMADO, MD, MS
Durham, North Carolina

TREASURER

RONALD B. KUPPERSMITH, MD, MBA
College Station, Texas

DIRECTORS

JEFFREY M. BUMPOUS, MD
Louisville, Kentucky

EDWARD H. FARRIOR, MD
Tampa, Florida

HOWARD W. FRANCIS, MD, MBA
Durham, North Carolina

C. GAELYN GARRETT, MD, MMHC
Nashville, Tennessee

MARLAN R. HANSEN, MD
Iowa City, Iowa

BRADLEY MARPLE, MD
Dallas, Texas

CHERIE-ANN O. NATHAN, MD
Shreveport, Louisiana

KRISHNA G. PATEL, MD, Ph.D
Charleston, South Carolina

KATHLEEN C. Y. SIE, MD
Seattle, Washington

TIMOTHY L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Portland, Oregon

STEVEN A. TELIAN, MD
Ann Arbor, Michigan

TRAVIS TOLLEFSON, MD, MPH
Sacramento, California

MARK C. WEISSLER, MD
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

GREGORY J. WIET, MD
Columbus, Ohio

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BRIAN NUSSENBAUM, MD, MHCM
Houston, Texas

ADMINISTRATOR

DIANA L. HARRELL

American Board of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery Written Qualifying Candidates

2020 Exam Update

July 16, 2020

Dear Written Qualifying Exam Candidate,

This has been a most extraordinary and challenging year for everyone, most notably for those of us serving in the health care community. COVID-19 introduced many uncertainties into our lives, and the course of the pandemic continues to evolve throughout the United States. Just as all practicing otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons, fellows, and residents have needed to adjust to meet the demands of this public health crisis, the ABOHNS has also been affected; making several temporary changes to our certification programs. We have been able to identify opportunities to respond and be flexible while retaining the integrity of our programs. One example was the decision regarding temporary changes to training requirements for board eligibility, which was communicated to all residents on April 1, 2020.

For the 2020 Written Qualifying Exam (WQE), the ABOHNS received feedback as candidates started to register that exam seats at Pearson Vue centers were difficult to find and the available seats were not necessarily at preferred locations. Guidance was provided by the board to candidates and the situation has been closely monitored. The ABOHNS also had several discussions both internally and externally about options that could be implemented to improve the situation for this year. We considered all the factors and constraints, including the current timeline needed to still conduct a WQE for 2020. After much discussion, the decision was made to add an extra date for the WQE in 2020. This has never been done before by the ABOHNS, and the decision was made quickly as it requires another examination to be prepared in a relatively brief time period. The date chosen was August 24, 2020 based on input from Pearson Vue that it would be day in which they could best offer extra capacity for candidates (number of seats and locations).

We are glad to report that with the addition of the August 24 date, 95-percent of candidates have now secured an exam seat. We recommend **that the few candidates remaining without a reserved exam seat still planning to take the exam contact Pearson Vue by calling 1-800-507-7744**. If your exam seat reservation is not in a preferred geographical area, please continue to reach out to Pearson Vue on a regular basis and inquire about availability on August 24, 2020 and September 1, 2020 at other test sites, as capacity in states, cities, and testing centers is changing daily based on the trajectory of COVID-19 and other factors.

In the July 6, 2020 communication to WQE candidates, the ABOHNS discussed additional flexibility for this year with the option of deferment. If you feel uncomfortable for any reason with taking the exam this year in a testing center environment or at the specific location where registered, this is an option you may wish to consider, at no cost. If you request a deferral, your board eligibility period will be extended by one year. You will also have the option to receive a refund or apply already paid fees to the exam next year. As a reminder, you can request a deferral up to five days before the exam you are registered for. Please refer to the July 6, 2020 communication for further details which can be found on the [ABOHNS website](#).

For those who elect not to defer taking the exam, the ABOHNS has been advised that Pearson Vue is taking steps to minimize the risk presented by COVID-19 at its testing centers by following established guidelines. Please note, the ABOHNS does not have oversight of Pearson Vue's COVID-19 procedures, and given the situation, it is impossible for us to guarantee there is no risk associated with taking the examination. ABOHNS encourages you to take all the personal protective steps to minimize your exposure during the examination as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other authorities. Also, if you are concerned about the risk of either taking the exam or traveling to the exam site, you may opt for a deferment as previously mentioned.

The ABOHNS thanks the several candidates that reached out to us to provide feedback and make suggestions. We also recognize that you are facing enormous challenges in all aspects of your lives due to COVID-19, and greatly appreciate your patience as we navigate in this unprecedented time. We hope that you, your families, and your colleagues remain safe and healthy. Please reach out to Rosa La Neve (Certification Coordinator) at RML@ABOHNS.ORG if you need further assistance or have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Nussenbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Brian Nussenbaum, MD, MHCM
Executive Director