About the American Board of Pathology

Mission and Vision

The American Board of Pathology (ABPath) was established in 1936 to advance the specialty of pathology and ensure the competence of pathologists for the benefit of the public. Certification by the ABPath is a hallmark of public and professional trust. As we face new challenges in healthcare, the vital role of board-certified pathologists is more important than ever. Our Mission and Vision statements exemplify our commitment to promote excellence in pathology and maintain the highest standards of care.

MISSION
The mission of the American Board of Pathology, a member of the American Board of Medical Specialties, is to serve the public and advance the profession of pathology by setting certification standards and promoting lifelong competency of pathologists.

VISION
The American Board of Pathology improves the health of the public by promoting excellence in the practice of pathology.
Our Core Values

Our Core Values: We are committed to the following values for our stakeholders who include patients, the public, diplomats, trainees, specialty societies, Trustees, Program Directors, ABMS member boards, volunteers, colleagues and employees.

- **Integrity & Professionalism**: We are committed to the highest standards, ethics and moral principles in our work, actions, and decisions to serve the best interests of stakeholders.
- **Innovation**: We embrace new ideas and change through teamwork to continually improve our board certification programs and internal processes.
- **Transparency**: We are open and responsive in our communications and collaborations with stakeholders.
- **Service**: We are committed to delivering exceptional and friendly service.
- **Stewardship**: We ensure the ABPath is led responsibly and that our resources are managed effectively to address the needs of stakeholders.
- **Accountability**: We are dedicated to the continuous improvement of diplomates’ practice and the quality of the pathology profession on behalf of stakeholders.

**Diplomates**

Maintaining the valuable credential of board certification indicates to the public and to the profession that diplomates are dedicated to providing the highest standard of care. Participation in continuous certification helps to assure that their medical knowledge is up to date and standards are met.

**Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is the governing body and oversees the achievement of strategic goals with a focus on transparency and accountability to our stakeholders.

**Staff**

The ABPath staff supports the Trustees, Diplomates, and Candidates while ensuring the organization is run efficiently and improving processes to support our mission.
This is the first of what we expect will be ongoing annual reports from the American Board of Pathology (ABPath). While the report features 2019 accomplishments, it is being released in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are so proud and thankful for the critical services that our diplomates provide every day, but especially during this unprecedented time. The response of pathology and laboratory medicine have been foundational in dealing with this pandemic.

In keeping with our mission to serve the public and advance the profession of pathology, ABPath is dedicated to having certification programs that best serve patients, diplomates, and others who rely on the meaningful credential of board certification. Our Board of Trustees and Staff are committed to continuous improvement in all that we do. 2019 was a year of change and innovation at the ABPath and a year of new and exciting programs for our candidates and diplomates as this report illustrates.

In 2019, we changed our abbreviation from ABP to ABPath, a simple, but important distinction from the other ABP, the American Board of Pediatrics. Our 2019 goals included improved communications and customer service, which has been enhanced by having a full-time Director of Communications, giving us a presence on social media, improving our website, and enhancing communications with our candidates and diplomates. In 2019, we put final touches on our strategic plan, with goals listed in this report.

2019 was a big year for the American Board of Medical Specialties and its Member Boards with the release of the “Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission Recommendations”. One of the principal recommendations was for boards to commit to longitudinal formative assessments and offer an alternative to the high-stakes, point-in-time examinations. Prior to the report, ABPath had already launched the ABPath CertLink® pilot in July of 2018 as an anticipated replacement for the Continuing Certification (CC) Part III exam. This program, which has been an incredible change and innovation, supports continuous professional development that is flexible and relevant to
The remarkable changes and evolution of the ABPath could not have happened without the commitment of time and expertise from our volunteers... We cannot thank them enough for all that they do.

In 2019 the CEO Search Committee was appointed to begin a search for a new CEO who will lead the ABPath beginning in January 2022. I am confident that the leadership transition will be smooth and that the ABPath will continue its progress forward. It has truly been an honor to serve as your CEO; it is the best job in all of pathology.

Sincerely,

Rebecca L. Johnson
Introduction of Certification Mark to Display Your Certification Status

The American Board of Pathology (ABPath) was pleased to provide diplomates an electronic certification mark for use in their emails, websites, print materials, and social media. The certification mark identifies a physician as board certified by ABPath. The use of this mark informs the public that a physician meets the certification standards established by the ABPath and is committed to providing excellence in patient care. It is available as a free download through ABPath’s PATHway for diplomates.

New Retired Status for Diplomates

Certification with an ABMS member board is a significant achievement. ABPath wished to continue recognizing physicians as diplomates after they stopped actively practicing medicine and no longer wanted to maintain their medical license and certifications. Retired status can be requested from ABPath by any current diplomate. Eligibility for Retired status can be found in the Continuing Certification (CC) Booklet of Information. Opting into the Retired status publicly lists the physician as Retired. Physicians listed as Retired no longer need to hold a medical license or participate in ABPath’s Continuing Certification Program to remain a diplomate of ABPath.
ABPath Statement on Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission Recommendations

The Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future Commission released its final report on February 12, 2019. The report included a set of recommendations for the evolution of continuing certification into a more meaningful and relevant program that brings value to a physician’s practice and meets the highest standard for quality patient care. ABPath is proud to share that, with input and the ongoing support from our stakeholders, we have already met or are well on our way to complying with each of the recommendations. In keeping with our mission, we are dedicated to designing a program that best serves diplomates, patients, and others who rely on the meaningful credential of board certification. ABPath’s complete response to the Commission recommendations can be read here.

New Resident and Fellow Advisory Committee

Through ABPath’s Advisory Committees, we encourage input from our stakeholders to develop and refine our certification programs. In 2019, we formed our newest committee which is made up of 11 Pathology Residents and Fellows with the purpose of providing feedback and suggestions for the ABPath board certification process. As the committee continues to meet, we look forward to discovering ways to best support pathology residents and fellows in the certification process.

ABPath is proud to share that we have already met or are well on our way to complying with each of the recommendations of the Vision Commission.
The Growth of ABPath CertLink®

2019 was a pivotal year for ABPath CertLink® (ABPCL), the online longitudinal assessment pilot program. ABPCL’s innovative approach has shown that there is a better way of knowledge assessment for Continuing Certification that allows for continuous learning in pathology.

The hard launch of the pilot began in 2018 and we currently have over 9,450 participants. ABPath is one of many member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties that were piloting a longitudinal assessment program. Based on its success, ABPCL will become the preferred method to assess knowledge and promote learning and excellence in pathology. Beginning January 2021, ABPCL will be a permanent alternative to the once every 10-year exam for the Part III Assessment of Knowledge, Judgment, and Skills requirement for CC.

During the testing phase, we encouraged and used feedback from diplomates to refine the platform to create a user-friendly experience for busy physicians. The response from diplomates was enthusiastic and they found it to be a meaningful and relevant assessment. A user survey showed 95% of respondents prefer to take a longitudinal assessment like ABPCL over the Part III exam.

Participants appreciate the convenience to log in anytime to answer 15 new multiple-choice questions per quarter (q 3 months). In this assessment design,
“I really like the new ABPath Certlink® and think it will be an excellent replacement to the part III exam. The format of periodic questions with immediate feedback is the best way to fulfill the objective of lifelong learning and staying current with practices and knowledge. It is also much more manageable with the busy lives of most of who at this point are working full time and balancing family and work demands. I actually am enjoying CertLink and can see the question bank expanding and improving, and find it helpful and productive. I can’t imagine the work that goes into piloting a project like this and am grateful to have been a participant and to be continuing in this program!”
Dr. Katie O’Reilly

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Dr. Katie O’Reilly

The questions were a superb learning experience and only thing I wished there were more per quarter and 3-minute time limit is really all that is needed. Enjoyed It.”
Dr. Jim Woytash

The program has been outstanding. It is a good way of getting prompt feedback and actually learning while taking a test.”
Dr. David Keep

Diplomates have 5 minutes to answer the question with access to any resources except another person. They receive immediate feedback about their response, a critique about the topic, and references. A personalized dashboard provides performance status to the participant and comparisons to their peers.

This dynamic platform helps identify knowledge gaps and provides feedback and resources to fill those gaps for pathologists in all stages of their career. As science is rapidly changing, this type of assessment enables us to incorporate new content and questions that are relevant to the current work of pathologists. We look forward to entering this new phase of Continuing Certification with ABPCL.
2019 Board Actions

The Board works year-round to uphold the mission of ABPath and serve our stakeholders. In 2019, the Board set new foundations as we work to continually improve our board certification programs.

• ABPath implemented a new policy that will allow residents to take time away from training for a maximum total of twelve months, for any reason. Rather than creating multiple policies for family leave, parental leave, medical leave, etc., this simple policy allows institutions and departments to create their own leave policies.

• ABPath implemented a strategic plan to support the ABPath’s mission and bring us closer to achieving our vision.

Our Six Strategic Goals

**Processes**
Identify and implement relevant and meaningful processes for the assessment of residents and fellows in initial certification programs.

**CC Value**
Increase the value of continuing certification programs by promoting lifelong learning, creating relevant assessments, and supporting diplomates in their efforts to stay current in their area of practice.

**Infrastructure**
Develop infrastructure and implement processes that support and promote strategic and organizational effectiveness.

**Financial Viability**
Ensure long term financial viability of the ABPath.

**Satisfaction**
Increase diplomates’ and other stakeholders’ satisfaction with and perceived value of ABPath.

**Trustee Effectiveness**
Increase the effectiveness of the Board of Trustees.
ABPath Strategic Goals are specific, attainable and results oriented.

We strive for open communication with all our stakeholders.

Strategic Goals of the ABPath

ABPath’s mission to serve the public and advance the profession of pathology is at the forefront of everything we do. We are dedicated to designing a program that best serves pathologists, patients, and others who rely on the meaningful credential of board certification. As we plan for the future, we have developed goals that are specific, attainable, and results oriented:

As we realize these goals, ABPath will continue to engage and maintain open communication with all our stakeholders who entrust us to advance the profession of pathology by setting certification standards and promoting lifelong competency of pathologists.
Working Collectively

We have been able to make great strides in achieving program goals due to valuable and longstanding partnerships that we have with our Cooperating Societies. 2019 saw the following program additions to facilitate the CC reporting process for our diplomates.

Cooperating Societies

The ABPath has 12 Cooperating Societies that we collaborate with to identify and address issues of importance to the profession of pathology. Through these valuable relationships, our Cooperating Societies support diplomates in their life-long learning and improvement in practice, their participation in Continuing Certification, and documenting their participation in educational and quality assessment activities.

Academy of Clinical Laboratory Physicians and Scientists
American Medical Association Pathology Section Council
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society for Investigative Pathology
American Society of Cytopathology
Association for Molecular Pathology
Association of Directors of Anatomic and Surgical Pathology
Association of Pathology Chairs
College of American Pathologists
Society for Hematopathology
Society for Pediatric Pathology
United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology

Earning CME/SAM for ABPath CertLink® Participation

Diplomates participating in ABPath CertLink® (ABPCL) can now claim up to 5 SAM-eligible CME credits for their participation each year. Credits are claimed through the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) in collaboration with the American Board of Pathology (ABPath). Diplomates do not have to be a member of ASCP to claim these credits. Credits for 2019 can be claimed up until December 31, 2020 and will be applied to the next Continuing Certification (CC) reporting form (2020 or 2021 depending on your initial certification year). Credit is 1.25 hours per completed quarter, which is defined as attempting all questions assigned by ABPCL for that quarter. There is a $19 processing fee payable to ASCP to receive your CME/ SAM credits and transcript. You may choose to have your credits automatically appear in your ABPath PATHway account through ACCME PARS at no additional cost. Additional information is available HERE.
ACCME Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS)

The American Board of Pathology (ABPath) partnered with the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to create an automated process for reporting a pathologist’s AMA PRA Category I CME (including SAMs) to the ABPath for our Continuing Certification Program. The ACCME Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS) provides tracking of completed CMEs in a diplomate’s PATHway account. Once a CME activity is completed, with a pathologist’s one-time permission and their ABPath ID#, an accredited CME provider that is participating in PARS will report this information to ACCME, which is then sent on to ABPath.

The CME credits will automatically show in the diplomate’s CC reporting form in PATHway, beginning with 2019 CC reporting forms. A transcript of CME credits reported via PARS is available for download as primary source documentation for medical licensure and credentialing. As an additional benefit of this partnership, diplomates can search for CME activities by credit type (CME, SAM, and Improvement in Medical Practice [Part IV]), provider, key word, and practice area in ACCME’s CME Finder (http://www.cmefinder.org/). For more information on PARS and CME reporting visit our website.
ABPath Publications

Steven H Swerdlow, MD, Sara A Monaghan, MD, Aaron R Douglas, PhD, Kristen Johnson, PhD, Rebecca L Johnson, MD. Harmonization of Training, Training Requirements, Board Certification, and Practice of Hematopathology. American Journal of Clinical Pathology, 2019; Vol 152, # 5, 625–637. https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcp/aqz084

Surveys of ABPath diplomates and Hematopathology (HP) fellowship directors assessed current practice and training in HP. The practice of HP has under-gone major changes over time and there was a paucity of data that could provide guidance to HP program directors (for training), to the ACGME Pathology Residency Review Committee (for accreditation of fellowship programs and program requirements), and to the ABPath for certification in HP. The findings provide objective data for further discussion among the major stakeholders so that training, practice, and board certification in HP can be more closely aligned.

The findings provide a basis to help lead the way to better harmonization between training, training requirements, board certification, and the practice of HP.
Conclusions

Despite some limitations, the survey of HP program directors and the two surveys of “recent” diplomates with very consistent results provide data that can be useful for guiding the development of HP fellowship curricula, in assessing expected volumes and training in HP fellowships, and as a basis for more objective decisions about what to emphasize on the HP certifying examination. Taken together, findings from the surveys are consistent with the premise that while the field of HP is expanding and while there are areas practiced by a relatively small proportion of hematopathologists, no areas should be totally deleted from HP training, practice, or certification. Some of the findings have already been used to help assess HP programs and alter the distribution of questions on the HP certifying examination. Finally, the findings provide a basis to help lead the way to better harmonization between training, training requirements, board certification, and the practice of HP, an important goal leading to the competent practice of HP. They also create a more complete picture of HP practice for those considering this subspecialty.
ABPath Examinations for Board Certification

Administration History of ABPath Certification Examinations

ABPath offers four Primary certificates and 11 Subspecialty certificates for those physicians who wish to specialize in pathology. This report reflects when we began offering each primary and subspecialty certification and how many certificates have been issued from inception through 2019.

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<th>CERTIFICATION</th>
<th>INITIAL YEAR</th>
<th>#Certificates Issued</th>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomic Pathology</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Clinical Informatics*</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>123</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cytopathology</td>
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<td>Dermatopathology*</td>
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<td>Forensic Pathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hematopathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Microbiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Molecular Genetic Pathology*</td>
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<td>632</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neuropathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric Pathology</td>
<td>1990</td>
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* In cooperation with another board
2019 Primary Examination Statistics

ABPath examinations are graded using the criterion-referenced method. For more information about examinations, please refer to the ABPath website here.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>First-Time Takers</th>
<th>Repeaters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>% Pass</td>
<td>#</td>
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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>562</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>81%</td>
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5-year Certified Report

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<td>78</td>
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<td>CP only</td>
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# Subspecialty Examination Statistics

## 2019 Subspecialty Examinations

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<th>First-Time Takers</th>
<th>Repeaters</th>
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<td>#</td>
<td>% Pass</td>
<td>#</td>
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<tr>
<td>BB/TM</td>
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<td>46 45</td>
<td>3 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>1 1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>23 78</td>
<td>20 18</td>
<td>3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>143 96</td>
<td>137 134</td>
<td>6 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>46 98</td>
<td>40 100</td>
<td>6 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>41 93</td>
<td>39 92</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>124 97</td>
<td>120 118</td>
<td>4 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>14 100</td>
<td>14 100</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MG</td>
<td>60 98</td>
<td>58 98</td>
<td>2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>23 96</td>
<td>23 96</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>23 96</td>
<td>20 100</td>
<td>3 2</td>
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## 5-year Certified Report

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<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>CI</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>137</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>FP</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>49</td>
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<tr>
<td>HP</td>
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<td>142</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>140</td>
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<td>MB</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>MG</td>
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<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
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Continuing Certification Examination Statistics

Continuing Certification (CC) Participants

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificates Enrolled</strong></td>
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<td>1176</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td>1175</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>15,365</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Certificates Lapsed/Revoked</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>432</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Diplomates Enrolled</strong></td>
<td>677</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>9,563</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Diplomates Lapsed/Revoked</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>355</td>
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2019 CC Examination Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC EXAMS</th>
<th>Total Candidates</th>
<th>% Pass</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>97.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2018</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>96.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2018</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>97.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2017</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>95.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2017</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>97.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2016</td>
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<td>99.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
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<td>Spring 2015</td>
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Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2019

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Exam Center Income</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>Total Revenue</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Expense</th>
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<td>Examinations</td>
<td>71</td>
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<td>Meetings</td>
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<td>Total Expense</td>
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<td>6,143,268</td>
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Revenue

ABPath revenue is generated from several sources. Examination fees are for the preparation and administration of Primary, Subspecialty and Continuing Certification exams. The ABPath Exam Center is rented by three other boards for delivering their exams each year.

Examination questions are written by volunteer pathologists. Per the IRS, their services must be reported as an In-kind Contribution (equivalent time a pathologist would be paid had they charged for these services).
Expenses

Examination expenses cover the cost of credentialing candidates; the development, administration and scoring of the exams; reporting results, and maintaining the Continuing Certification program, including ABPath CertLink®.

Meeting expenses include the travel and administrative expenses for volunteer test committee members and Trustees. Management and general expenses include employee salaries, benefits, insurance, information technology support and licensing, facility and equipment rental and maintenance, ABMS member fees, and the cost of providing services to our diplomates such as ABPath CertLink, ACCME PARS, and remote Continuing Certification examinations.
The ABPath is governed by 12 physician members and one public member. Each member is highly esteemed and accomplished in their respective fields and/or subspecialty. ABPath Trustees are responsible for collectively governing and upholding the integrity of the Board’s mission to serve the public and advance the profession of pathology by setting certification standards and promoting lifelong competency of pathologists.

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ABPath Volunteers

Test Development and Advisory Committees (TDAC)

Since 1971, the ABPath has appointed test committees for the various disciplines of pathology. The committees consist of volunteer pathologists who are recognized subject matter experts in their field. The TDAC committees are chaired by a Trustee of the ABPath. The members of the Test Development and Advisory Committees for 2019 were as follows:

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- Michael L. Talbert, MD

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Our Volunteers Make the Difference- The work of ABPath could not be accomplished without the dedication and expertise of our volunteers. We want to thank them all for their time and talents.
The Continuing Certification (CC) Advisory Committee is made up of 12 volunteer diplomates with diverse backgrounds, specialties, and experience. It is chaired by an ABPath Trustee. The Committee advises and provides feedback to the ABPath Board of Trustees for continuous evaluation and improvement of Continuing Certification from a diplomate’s perspective. Members serve three years on the Committee.

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The ABPath Resident and Fellow Advisory Committee is made up of 11 Pathology Residents and Fellows with the purpose of providing feedback and suggestions for improvement to ABPath about the board certification process. The committee was newly established in 2019. With their insights, we look forward to finding ways to better support pathology residents and fellows in the certification process.

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David J. Papke, Jr., MD
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Neda Wick, MD
Nicholas Zoumberos, MD

ABPCL Item writers
We have over 100 item writers for ABPCL. All item writers are board-certified pathologists who have volunteered to share their expertise by writing questions for the ABPath CertLink® assessment. Their contributions in 2019 have helped to enrich and refine the program. We truly appreciate their dedication to help shape the future of Continuing Certification.
“The glue that holds the entire organization together and gets the strategic directives accomplished is our dedicated, competent staff. They are the best and do not get nearly the appreciation they deserve.”

Dr. Rebecca Johnson, CEO
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