

Dear Colleague:

We are pleased to announce a historic collaboration involving nearly every major Emergency Medicine organization: The Coalition to Oppose Medical Merit Badges. Coalition members include the following organizations:

- American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM)
- American Academy of Emergency Medicine/Resident and Student Association (AAEM/RSA)
- American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM)
- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians (ACOEP)
- American Osteopathic Board of Emergency Medicine (AOBEM)
- Association of Academic Chairs of Emergency Medicine (AACEM)
- Council of Emergency Medicine Residency Directors (CORD)
- Emergency Medicine Residents' Association (EMRA)
- Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM)

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Board-certified emergency physicians who actively maintain their board certification should not be required to complete short-course certification in advanced resuscitation, trauma care, stroke care, cardiovascular care, procedural sedation, or pediatric care in order to obtain or maintain medical staff privileges to work in an emergency department. Similarly, mandatory targeted continuing medical education (CME) requirements do not offer any meaningful value for the public or for the emergency physician who has achieved and maintained board certification. Such requirements are often promulgated by others who incompletely understand the foundation of knowledge and skills acquired by successfully completing an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education–accredited or American Osteopathic Association–approved Emergency Medicine residency program. These “merit badges” add no additional value for board-certified emergency physicians. Instead, they devalue the board certification process, failing to recognize the rigor of the ABEM Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program and the AOBEM Osteopathic Continuous Certification program. In essence, medical merit badges set a lower bar than a diplomate’s education, training, and ongoing learning, as measured by initial board certification and maintenance of certification.

**The Coalition finds no rational justification to require medical merit badges for board-certified emergency physicians who maintain their board certification.** Our committed professional organizations provide the best opportunities for continuous professional development and medical merit badges dismiss the quality of those educational efforts.

Opposing the requirements for medical merit badges will be a long and challenging struggle. It will take time to help administrators and regulatory bodies to better understand the rigorous standards to which we adhere as board-

certified emergency physicians. In the coming months, we will develop our long-term strategy to create success and a pathway to recognize clinical excellence. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions as to how we can best succeed. In the near future, we will ask for strong support and a loud and unified voice.

We will persist and we are up to the challenge—we are board-certified emergency physicians. Opposing medical merit badges is the right thing to do for our specialty. We will forever demonstrate a lifelong commitment to caring for anyone who is ill or injured, at any time, for any reason.

Sincerely,

Kevin G. Rodgers, MD  
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