

The Importance of Verifying the Professional Knowledge of Audiologists

By John Coverstone

ABA certification for audiologists has been one of the top issues in our profession for at least the past 10 years. The American Board of Audiology (ABA) was founded in 1999 out of a desire for audiologists to have certification practices that are completely under the auspices of audiologists (similar to the reasons for founding the American Academy of Audiology in 1988), elevate the commitment of certified audiologists to a higher educational and ethical standard, are relevant specifically to the profession of audiology, and are a higher standard than state licensure. Although there are finite requirements imposed to attain certification, this goal has been achieved through the requirement of a greater number and higher level (Tier 1) of continuing education courses, as well as the requirement of adherence to a rigorous ethical practices standard, and one that is continually evolving to meet the demands of modern audiology practice. For these reasons, ABA board certification is meaningful, relevant, and able to withstand scrutiny from inside and outside the profession.

The standards for achieving a specialty certification are even higher. Specialty certification is the hallmark of certification in most professions. Specialty certification

verifies professional experience to employers and provides consumers with a method of identifying audiologists with specialized knowledge in a given area, thus increasing their confidence in the audiologist's level of expertise.

Specialty certification, currently offered in cochlear implants and pediatrics, requires a qualification exam and higher degree of professional practice and mentoring to achieve it. Specialty certifications are created through an arduous process of professional practice analysis,

Board Certified in Audiology is a distinct professional credential administered exclusively by audiologists for audiologists. This voluntary certification program is available to audiologists regardless of membership in any professional organization.




knowledge and skills rating, development of professional requirements and standards that reflect a high level of achievement, and development of an exam that is based on the highest possible standards—namely those imposed by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a globally recognized authority in certification practices.

Certification represents a declaration of an audiologist's professional competence. Many organizations in today's competitive and challenging economy have recognized their workforce as their most valuable asset. Likewise, individuals, whether employed or self-employed, know that now more than ever before they must acquire and maintain more comprehensive skill sets to ensure their own attractiveness and ability in the workplace.

No matter how high the goals or achievements of any certification program, it is vital that this not be a static process and that all audiologists are aware of the dynamic nature of certification. The staff and board of the ABA are constantly discussing and reviewing requirements and standards, at minimum every five years as the profession changes. Exams are constantly being reviewed and questions revised, discarded, or added as specialty practice areas change. A certification that does not

change becomes increasingly less meaningful with every passing day. For this reason, it is essential to certification that we all, as a profession, continue to discuss, analyze, and critique the certifications that are relevant to our professional practice.

Certification ultimately is not owned by the ABA, the ABA Board of Governors nor the subject matter experts. It is owned by the profession of audiology and everyone who is within this profession. Part of taking ownership is to join the discussion and add your expertise, insight, and opinions to the continuing dialogue about certification. There are multiple ways to do this: discuss certification with colleagues, engage in informed discussions within professional forums, attend courses about certification, or respond to surveys about certification or about the profession. When the greater body of audiologists becomes actively engaged in the process of certification, the certifications become stronger, more meaningful, and more relevant to professional practice. Please, join us! 

John Coverstone, AuD, is the chair of the ABA Board of Governors.

The ABA is pleased to announce the most recent audiologists who are Board Certified in Audiology as of May 31, 2012.

Reem Alqahtani, AuD
Diana Anderson, AuD
Jill T. Atwood, AuD
Virginia B. Bailey, AuD
Tricia R. Benjamin, AuD
Julie Bier, AuD
Chris R. Borders, AuD
Becky L. Braun, AuD
John D. Burkart, AuD
Rachel Anne Cooper, AuD
Margaret S. Dean, PhD
Jennifer Donath, AuD
Cheryl Edwards, AuD
Kevin G. Flanagan, AuD
Douglas B. Garrison, AuD
Amal Ghabril Awdeh, AuD
Susan M. Gibbons, AuD
Heather M. Guy, AuD
Deborah Hayes, PhD
Walter F. Horan, AuD
Jennine L. Kelley, AuD
Debra A. LaPrete, AuD
Jennifer Lazzaro, AuD
Lesley Lee, AuD
Jodi Little, AuD
Erin E. Maierle, AuD
Cara Makuta, AuD
Esther V. McCormick, AuD
Rachel Lynne McNeal, AuD
Kristin E. Musser, AuD
Jennifer M. Noetzel, AuD
Julie A. Norin, AuD
Amanda D. Pearson, AuD
Tacita Persad-Maharaj, AuD
Janice Leigh Richbourg, AuD
Heidi D. Roberts, AuD
Jeffrey G. Sirianni, AuD
Carolyn E. Thompson, AuD
Kimberly Throckmorton, AuD
Tressie L. Waldo, AuD
Crystal D. Wiggins, AuD
Alicia M. Winston, AuD