



# Frequently Asked Questions When Applying for Subspecialty Certification in Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM)

**Disclaimer:** These FAQs are meant to serve merely as guidance for individuals considering applying to be accepted by the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) to sit for the PHM certification examination. The FAQs create no contract, guaranty of acceptance or performance, or other legal obligation on behalf of the ABP. The FAQs and the eligibility criteria for certification in PHM can also be subject to change and/or amendment.

## Practice Pathway

### How will the COVID-19 pandemic affect the ABP Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM) practice pathway?

- The ABP recognizes the pandemic has affected some physicians' ability to meet the eligibility criteria. The next two exams have been adjusted by one year to allow for more time to meet the hours criteria and will be given in 2022 and 2024. The look-back window has been modified and will be five years in duration, and one year of practice can be excluded if hours are deficient. However, an applicant needs to have started practice no later than July 2017 or July 2019 to be eligible to sit for the 2022 or 2024 exams, respectively.
- There is no modification to the total hours required for the four required years in the five-year look-back window for the practice pathway. Each year considered is independent, and hours cannot be averaged across years.

### How is a "year" of practice defined?

- A year is defined as an academic year, starting in July and ending the following year by June 30.

### I did not start in July of the look-back window. Can I qualify for the exam?

- No. You must begin practice in or before July, at the start of the look-back window, regardless of the number of hours you have accrued.

### How will the ABP verify my hospital medicine practice?

- The ABP will ask you to provide the number of hours worked in each academic year for every individual practice location and confirm the scope of your practice as part of your application for certification.
- You will be prompted to list the individual(s) responsible for verification at each practice site when completing an application. A verification form will be sent to the email address(s) you provide for your supervisor(s) on the application.
- Supervisor Attestation Forms will be required from all sites where the candidate has accumulated practice hours. The physician supervisor must have knowledge of the applicant's practice and be able to accurately verify the data provided for review. Acceptable supervisors include the:
  - Pediatric program director of the PHM fellowship training program at one's training institution, if applicable; OR



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- PHM division director; OR
- Pediatric department chair; OR
- Chief of pediatrics or chief of staff; OR
- Physician site director.

## **I have practiced PHM for more than five years. Should I include a description of all my practice experience in my application?**

- You must include information on your application that describes the most recent five years of your practice experience, as this information will be used to assess your eligibility for the exam. You may include practice information from before the look-back window, but practice experience before the look-back window is not part of the eligibility criteria.

## **How long will the practice pathway be available? How long is an applicant eligible once approved?**

- The practice pathway will be available for first-time applicants for the next two exams in 2022 and 2024. First-time applicants must have completed the requirements for the practice pathway in the most recent five years. For example, a first-time applicant using the practice pathway for the 2022 examination must meet the practice requirements over the most recent five years (July 2017–June 2022).
- Once an application is approved by the ABP, which means the eligibility requirements are met, the applicant has seven years to pass the exam to become certified. See the ABP's Time-Limited Eligibility policy for more detailed eligibility information.

## **Can I substitute hours caring for adult patients on the general medicine service for general pediatrics hours?**

- No. This certificate given by the ABP is specific to pediatric care.

## **I have a research grant that limits my clinical PHM practice time. May I qualify?**

- For individuals with research grants that prohibit the accrual of the required PHM clinical practice hours, the ABP may consider the need to adhere to a grant protocol; however, supplemental documentation may be required.

## **While a chief resident, I practiced PHM for a year. May I use this time toward the requirements for the practice pathway?**

- Your chief residency clinical experience *may* qualify toward the accrual of practice if your experience meets the practice requirements. At least 900 hours during this year must be spent engaged in *unsupervised* professional activities (e.g., clinical care, teaching, quality improvement, patient safety, research, administration) related to the care of hospitalized children similar to a hospital medicine physician. Traditional chief resident activities do not count, such as scheduling, teaching performed as part of the chief role (bedside or didactic) or committee work as a chief resident liaison, etc.



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- Your practice as the attending of record for hospitalized general pediatrics service patients must be at least 450 hours over the chief year. This direct clinical care activity counted toward the practice requirements must be unsupervised, *independent practice*.

## **I have practiced PHM full time, but for only two years. May I qualify?**

- No. Individuals applying through the practice pathway must accrue at least four years of practice in the five-year window of time and meet all of the eligibility criteria before they may be approved for the exam. Individuals who will not accrue the expected years of qualifying practice in time for the exam given in 2024 will be unable to apply using the practice pathway and must complete the training pathway requirements.

## **May I moonlight and receive credit toward the practice requirements?**

- Yes. Moonlighting time in the care of hospitalized children for a PHM physician can count toward meeting the hours requirements as long as all other requirements (e.g., patient age, breadth of practice) are met. Each location of practice must be included in the application.

## Training Pathway

### **When will the ABP require training to be completed in an accredited Pediatric Hospital Medicine (PHM) fellowship program?**

- Starting in July 2022, individuals who start PHM fellowship as a first-year fellow must enter an ACGME-accredited PHM training program in the United States or RCPSC-accredited PHM training program in Canada.

### **When will the ABP require that fellows in PHM meet the requirements for Scholarly Activity?**

- Scholarly activity, as defined in the ABP's General Criteria for Subspecialty Certification, will be required for all individuals who start training on or after July 1, 2022.
- Please note that once fellowship programs achieve ACGME accreditation, they are expected by the ACGME to comply with all program requirements. ACGME program accreditation is separate from credentialing of individuals by the ABP.

### **When will the Subspecialty In-Training Examination (SITE) be available for trainees?**

- SITE for Pediatric Hospital Medicine will be available in 2022.

## Combination Training and Practice Pathway

### **I have completed a one-year training program in PHM. May I qualify?**

- Yes. Individuals completing a one-year fellowship in PHM may qualify if all of the following requirements have been met:



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- The training was completed successfully in a U.S. or Canadian program accredited by ACGME or RCPSC, respectively.
- The individual has also completed two years of practice in pediatric hospital medicine.
- The practice was completed within the past five years.
- The training was completed within the past seven years.

## Time-Limited Eligibility

### What does "Time-Limited Eligibility" mean?

- "Time-Limited Eligibility" means that you are eligible to become certified as long as you pass the certifying exam within seven years of being approved to sit for the exam. You do not need to take or pass the certifying exam in the same year that you are approved. You will be eligible to take the exam that year if you choose or for the next seven years when the exam is offered. ABP subspecialty initial certifying exams are given every two years and not annually.

### How many times may I take the exam during my eligibility period?

- An applicant may take the exam as often as it is offered during their eligibility period. ABP subspecialty exams are given every two years and not annually.

### I am applying through the training pathway. When does my eligibility end?

- For the 2022 and 2024 exams, a first-time applicant must have completed fellowship training within the previous seven years. This means if you apply for the 2022 exam, your training must have ended in 2015 or later. Once an application is approved (eligibility requirements are met), the applicant has seven years to pass the exam to become certified. For example, if you are approved for the 2022 exam, you will have seven years (through Dec 2029) to become certified in PHM. If you are unsuccessful or do not take the exam, the "time clock" for eligibility does not reset. The ABP subspecialty initial certifying exams are given every two years and not annually.

| Exam/Approval Year | Training Completed No Earlier Than | LAST AVAILABLE EXAM | Eligibility End Date |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2019               | 2012                               | 2026                | 2026                 |
| 2022               | 2015                               | 2028                | 2029                 |
| 2024               | 2017                               | 2030                | 2031                 |

- If your training was completed more than seven years before the exam, you must apply through the practice pathway.



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## I am applying through the practice pathway. When does my eligibility end?

- The practice pathway is open to first-time applicants for 2022 and 2024. Once an application is approved (eligibility requirements are met), the applicant has seven years to pass the exam to become certified. If you are unsuccessful or do not take the exam, the "time clock" for eligibility does not reset. ABP subspecialty initial certifying exams are given every two years and not annually.

| Exam/Approval Year | LAST AVAILABLE EXAM | Eligibility End Date |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 2019               | 2026                | 2026                 |
| 2022               | 2028                | 2029                 |
| 2024               | 2030                | 2031                 |

## What happens if I do not pass the exam (become certified) before my eligibility expires?

- For any applicant whose eligibility expires, regardless of whether he/she/they applied through the practice pathway, the training pathway, or the combination pathway, a six-month period of supervised practice experience must be completed in an accredited PHM fellowship training program before resubmitting an application for eligibility. Please refer to the ABP's policy, [Time-Limited Eligibility for Initial Certifying Examinations](#), and the accompanying [FAQ](#) and [Plan for Assessment of Competence in a Subspecialty in the Accredited Training Program](#) for details.

## Other Questions

### I am currently a resident and will be entering practice as a pediatric hospitalist after graduation. May I qualify by the practice pathway to sit for the pediatric hospital medicine exam?

- No. Graduating trainees who start practice after July 2019 will not meet the PHM practice pathway criteria.

### I am an osteopathic pediatrician and have not completed an ACGME-accredited general pediatrics residency. Am I eligible for certification by either the training or practice pathway?

- No. An individual must be certified by the ABP in general pediatrics to take a certifying examination in any pediatric subspecialty.

### What happens if my application is disapproved? May I appeal?

- Yes. When candidates apply through the practice pathway, the application is reviewed against the ABP's eligibility criteria. If an individual is denied entry to the examination, there is an opportunity to appeal. More detailed information may be required of such applicants. If an



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application is disapproved or the applicant cancels by the published date, the exam fee is refunded. The processing fee is non-refundable. Any late fees accrued are non-refundable.

## Certification and Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

**I am a permanent certificate holder in general pediatrics. Must I participate in MOC to be eligible for PHM certification?**

- No. As a permanent certificate holder, participation in general pediatrics MOC is voluntary for you, and you do not need to participate in MOC to become eligible for the PHM certifying exam. However, if you are successful on the exam and become certified in PHM, you must engage in PHM MOC to remain certified in the subspecialty.

**I have a lapsed general pediatrics certificate. What must I do to take the PHM exam?**

- To become certified in PHM, you must first regain your ABP certification in general pediatrics.

**Must I maintain my general pediatrics certificate after I become certified in Pediatric Hospital Medicine?**

- No. The ABP allows diplomates to maintain subspecialty certification without simultaneously maintaining certification in general pediatrics.

## Applications and Acceptance

**When must I begin to accrue practice?**

- For the 2022 exam, practice must start in the month of July 2017. For the 2024 exam, practice must start in the month of July 2019.

**I am applying for the exam during the registration period of February 2022–April 2022. How should I enter the dates of my practice?**

- Enter your anticipated practice information through the end date of June 30, 2022, despite it being a future date.

**How do I enter practice dates if I have practiced at multiple locations at the same time?**

- Provide each location, indicating the date range at this location, regardless of whether it overlaps with practice at another location. Include the number of hours you accrued within the date range and provide supervisor information for each site.

**What information do I need handy at the time of my application through the practice pathway?**

- The dates of your practice
- Name(s) and contact information, including email address, for the individual(s) who supervised or currently supervises your practice



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- Website address of each of your HMED practice locations
- Hospital services you worked in for each practice location
- Current, unrestricted U.S. or Canadian medical license number and **expiration date**
- Current certification in general pediatrics (permanent certification or must be meeting MOC requirements before October 13, 2022)
- Credit card information.

The ABP will contact your supervisor(s) to request attestation forms.

## What information do I need handy to provide at the time of my application through the training pathway?

- Your training institution, exact dates of training, and name of the program director
- If a General Academic Pediatrics (GAP) fellowship, the number of clinical months devoted to:
- Direct care of hospitalized children under the supervision of a pediatric hospitalist
- Anesthesiology, emergency medicine, or other areas
- Number of months dedicated to nonclinical training, such as scholarly work or research
- Current, unrestricted U.S. or Canadian medical license number and **expiration date**
- Current certification in general pediatrics (permanent certification or must be meeting MOC requirements before October 13, 2022)

The ABP will contact the PHM program director to request verification of your training and clinical competence.

## When are acceptances for the exam announced?

- Acceptances will be posted to the applicant's [ABP Portfolio](#) on the ABP website in late summer 2022. Until your application is credentialed, your registration status will continue to display as pending acceptance on your ABP portfolio.

## If my application is approved, but I wish to cancel the exam, is there a deadline?

- The deadline to cancel the exam with a partial refund will be in October 2022, with a final date to be determined and published. The exam fee is refunded. The processing fee is non-refundable, and any late fees accrued are non-refundable.

December 18, 2020