



## ABP Corporate Policy Stating Certification Status

Many diplomates include information about their certification status on letterhead, business cards and other materials. Board Certification is an important marker of competence and skill, and the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) encourages diplomates to showcase this accomplishment with their patients, colleagues and the public.

The following are policies set by the ABP on how to accurately state ABP certification status. All diplomates receive a copy of these guidelines on initial certification. They are instructed to follow these guidelines throughout their career. Should these guidelines change, diplomates will be notified.

ABP's official policy is as follows:

**Diplomates of the ABP must accurately state their certification status at all times. This includes descriptions in curriculum vitae, advertisements, publications, directories, and letterheads. Diplomates with expired time-limited certification or those whose certification is revoked may not claim board certification by the ABP and must revise all descriptions of their qualifications accordingly. When a physician misrepresents certification status, the ABP may notify local credentialing bodies, licensing bodies, and others, as well as impose an administrative penalty or take legal action.**

Diplomate certification status is reported publicly on the ABP's website, [www.abp.org](http://www.abp.org) and through the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), which establishes standards for physician specialty certification for its 24 member boards, including the ABP. The ABP does not authorize the use of its logo by others, however, diplomates are encouraged to use the electronic "I am certified" logo on their websites and other practice materials.

The ABP does not mandate the specifics of how diplomates state their certification, except to say diplomates should not state or imply that they are certified if their certification has expired or lapsed. If diplomates have multiple certifications and allow one of them to lapse, they should revise all public materials (letterhead, business cards, advertisements, etc.) to reflect only those certifications that are currently valid. For example, if a diplomates original general pediatric certification has lapsed and they are now certified in a subspecialty, only the subspecialty certification should be stated.

Following are examples of accurate statements of certification:

- Once pediatricians have successfully passed their initial certification exam or diplomates have renewed their certification through the ABP's Maintenance of Certification program, they may represent themselves as "ABP Board Certified in (general pediatrics and/or their subspecialty)" or as a "Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics":
  - **John Doe, MD, ABP Board Certified in General Pediatrics**
  - **John Doe, MD, a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatrics**
- If diplomates maintain more than one current and valid certificate, they may indicate that they are Board Certified in both areas:
  - **John Doe, MD, ABP Certified in General Pediatrics and Pediatric Cardiology**



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- Diplomates may indicate that their certification was issued by the “American Board of Pediatrics.” For example, if they hold a subspecialty certificate in pediatric cardiology, they may represent themselves as:
  - **John Doe, MD, Board Certified in Pediatric Cardiology by the American Board of Pediatrics**
- Diplomates must always correctly state their certification status. Diplomates must pay particular attention to group practice listings. A blanket statement that everyone in a group is Board Certified is misleading if multiple specialties are listed and some group members are certified in certain specialties and others are not currently certified. The ABP expects that certifications will be listed individually and not stated in a way that is misleading.

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