

Editorial

A "CERTIFICATE OF ADDED CERTIFICATION" BY THE AMERICAN BOARD OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

This editorial reviews current developments in the long-standing efforts to provide for specialty training and certification for physicians who specialize in undersea and hyperbaric medicine.

The issue has been discussed for years, but it was not until 1985 that the UHMS established "The College of Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy" to produce and administer a specialty examination and to certify those who passed. In 1986 the name was changed to "The American College of Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine." It was soon learned that the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) would not approve a separate board, so a search was instigated to find an existing specialty board that would give a "Certificate of Added Qualifications" to their diplomates after prescribed training and testing. The concept was approved by the American Board of Preventive Medicine in 1988, and finally by the ABMS on September 1989. By this time, however, the College had been dissolved. Therefore, Tom Neuman, present President of the UHMS, has asked R. Dean Heimbach to chair an *ad hoc* committee to direct the development of an examination for the American Board of Preventive Medicine. The Committee will begin deliberations soon.

The purposes of the American Board of Preventive Medicine's new certificate are to a) improve the comprehensive occupational health care of commercial, military, and scientific divers and caisson or tunnel workers in the compressed gas environment; b) improve safety and the ethical practice of hyperbaric medicine in the treatment of decompression disorders resulting from undersea work; c) promote formal fellowship training in undersea medicine; d) provide a career pattern for young physicians who seek formal training for careers in research and the clinical practice of undersea and hyperbaric medicine; and e) provide national recognition for certified specialists in preventive medicine who have qualified through formal fellowship training and experience in undersea medicine.

Unfortunately, the Certificate of Added Qualification will only be available to physicians who are already certified in preventive medicine. Now that the ABMS has approved of the preventive medicine board's action, we hope boards in other specialties will also make it possible for their diplomates to earn a Certification of Added Qualification in undersea and hyperbaric medicine.

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