

A Concept Paper Regarding the Formation of an International Pediatric Credentialing Collaborative

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December 2008

Background

The leadership of the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) recently completed a series of strategic planning sessions that included discussions regarding the ABP's potential role as a standard setting body with others outside the United States. As a result of these strategic discussions, the ABP Board of Directors agreed that it was appropriate for the ABP to participate in a process that promotes global standards for training and evaluation worldwide. As a starting place, ABP staff was charged to explore collaborative relationships with other international credentialing bodies that might lead to the globalization of pediatric standards. After preliminary discussions with leaders from around the world, we have decided to approach other credentialing entities such as the European Board of Pediatrics and the Arab Board of Pediatrics, regional and national authorities such as the various Royal Colleges and Ministries of Health, and accreditation bodies that may also be interested in international opportunities (eg, ACGME, Joint Commission – International) to carry out this charge.

We understand that many details will need to be addressed in order to promote global standards in pediatrics, but we believe that the current climate in medicine is ideal for advancing the concept of an international collaboration of credentialing organizations.

The ABP's Anticipated Role in this Process

With more than 75 years of experience in setting standards for training and evaluation, the ABP Board of Directors feels that the ABP is uniquely positioned to assist in facilitating a global collaborative for the development of uniform standards. The Board of Directors charged us with the specific **mission** to –

"...pursue strategic relationships with other credentialing bodies that will result in the promotion of global standards for training and evaluation in pediatrics."

In light of this, the ABP is desirous of facilitating discussions with world leaders with the ultimate goal of realizing improved healthcare for children worldwide. The ABP has no desire to assume the sole responsibility for such a project; our aim is to initiate the exploration process and then assume an appropriate collaborative role as the process unfolds. The **vision** of the proposed global initiative is very straightforward –

"...create uniform standards that will drive improvement in the quality of medical care provided to infants, children, adolescents, and young adults worldwide."

We believe this vision aligns with that of the leadership of other international credentialing groups.

Ultimately, the ABP envisions its role in such an arrangement as assisting in standard-setting for training and evaluation. We feel that our proven measurement products and services may easily be leveraged by the international community to advance global standards for training and evaluation. The ABP currently has available a large menu of assessment products that can readily be used in any English

language based evaluative process. These can target: 1) graduate and post-graduate pediatric training with respect to in-training, certification and/or qualification examinations, and 2) professional development activities that ensure continued competence throughout a pediatrician's career. Furthermore, given the current state of information technology, the ABP believes it could position itself fairly quickly to provide these products and services as part of a larger international collaborative.

More specifically, the ABP role, in collaboration with others, would be primarily to offer products and services that:

1. Promote **global standards for training** in general pediatrics and most pediatric subspecialties (see Appendix),
2. Provide or assist in the development of **certification examinations** for adequately trained general pediatricians and pediatric subspecialists, and
3. Provide access to **professional development activities** that have been created for the United States maintenance of certification process.

We originally considered undertaking this endeavor as an independent activity of the ABP at the international level. However, we quickly realized that an independent attempt to promote such broad-sweeping standards would result in a multitude of joint arrangements with individual physicians, local institutions, government agencies, and/or larger regional authorities, and that such a conglomeration of relationships would be unwieldy and would slow down the goal of promoting global standards. This has led us to propose the formation of an international credentialing collaborative approach as a means to better promote global standards that will lead to higher quality health care in pediatrics.

Engaging the International Pediatric Community

Understanding the enormity of this endeavor, the global pediatric leadership will need to agree to its feasibility and to participate in its evolution. Thought leaders will need to shape fundamental philosophical issues such as the potential for international certification and its ramifications. Given our recent discussions with leaders in other countries, the goal is not to replace existing credentialing bodies and their certification processes. Rather, it is to work collaboratively with each other, possibly in the context of a global consortium, to leverage joint experience and expertise as a means for spreading global standards related to training and evaluation.

In order to explore the feasibility of this collaborative approach with pediatric leaders from around the world, we offer the following recommendations for consideration:

Recommendation #1 – Convene an Exploration Team comprised of a small group of leaders from key credentialing bodies around the world. The Team would begin to engage in preliminary discussions around the concepts presented in this paper and prepare a proposal for advancing an international collaborative.

Recommendation #2 – Include in these discussions representatives of the recently formed International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association (IPALA).

Recommendation #3 – This initial work should be done in close coordination with the International Pediatric Association (IPA). The IPA has built a very successful network of relationships with academic leaders around the world; this should be capitalized upon.

Summary

This is a particularly opportune time to explore this concept of an international pediatric collaborative given the rapid globalization of medicine. We recommend that credentialing bodies around the world consider forming a strategic collaborative partnership with the intended mission of promoting uniform standards of training and evaluation. It is not difficult to conceive that a collaborative endeavor of this nature would have a high probability of success for attaining our shared vision to *improve the quality of medical care provided to infants, children, adolescents, and young adults worldwide*.

The ABP believes the ideas presented herein provide a unique opportunity for the international pediatric community to work together to advance the healthcare of children. We do not believe that any single organization can accomplish this mission alone. Finally, we see our role in this endeavor as facilitative and are willing to offer our experience and expertise as appropriate.

Thank you for your careful and thoughtful consideration of the ideas put forth in this draft paper.

Appendix

ABP Pediatric Subspecialties

1. Adolescent Medicine
2. Cardiology
3. Child Abuse
4. Critical Care Medicine
5. Developmental-Behavioral
6. Emergency Medicine
7. Endocrinology
8. Gastroenterology
9. Hematology-Oncology
10. Infectious Diseases
11. Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine
12. Nephrology
13. Pulmonology
14. Rheumatology

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