

Global Standards for Postgraduate Training in General Pediatrics: The International Pediatric Community Considers a Vision

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During a recent strategic planning session, the leadership of the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP) discussed its potential role in the international pediatric community. For the first 75 years of its existence, the ABP has focused on the American public, with the singular mission to improve the quality of care for the country's children by setting the standards that impact the training and assessment of pediatricians. As a result of these discussions, the board of directors felt that, as one of the world's leading pediatric regulatory and standard-setting bodies, the ABP is well positioned to collaborate with the international pediatric regulatory community to provide shared standard-setting and assessment resources. Sharing these resources could ultimately lead to better training, assessment, accreditation, and professional development of pediatricians worldwide, which, in turn, could foster improvement in children's health beyond our borders. A dialogue was opened with leaders in the international community to explore potential opportunities in this regard.

The ABP began exploratory activities by contacting the leadership of regulatory bodies around the world to solicit their advice about how best to proceed. Initial discussions led to the convening of a multinational group of thought leaders from pediatric educational and standard-setting organizations to explore the feasibility of collaboration in the development of global standards for postgraduate training. The ABP Foundation agreed to fund these and future exploratory meetings.

The Global Pediatric Consortium

In July 2009, the first "Global Pediatric Summit on Setting Standards for Postgraduate Training and Assessment" was held in Frankfurt, Germany. Representatives from national and transnational training and accreditation organizations and several guest organizations met to begin discussions about the feasibility of establishing common core standards related to pediatric postgraduate training, assessment, accreditation, and professional development ([Appendix](#); available at www.jpeds.com). Summit attendees agreed to form an ad hoc working group, designated the Global Pediatric Consortium

(GPC), which would spend the next 12 months exploring the concept of developing common standards for postgraduate training. The GPC arrived at several concrete agreements that included these goals: (1) To explore the value of establishing a collaborative network of training and accrediting organizations with the intent to design a standardized approach to training and assessment for postgraduate training and continuing professional development; (2) To form several smaller working groups to review existing training curricula and to draft a core competency framework, a listing of knowledge elements that should be taught and assessed during and after training, and a common approach, or structure, for training, all of which would provide a standardized approach to training and assessment that can be used regardless of geographical boundaries; (3) To convene a second Global Pediatric Summit in May 2010 to review progress on the draft curriculum and to continue discussions about global assessment strategies and the future of the collaborative initiative; (4) To work with the International Pediatric Association to convene a meeting of the GPC at the 26th Congress of Pediatrics in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2010, to begin sharing the concepts of common global standards with the international community; (5) To conduct a global study of the current state of pediatric training and the pediatric physician workforce; and (6) To publish a white paper describing the initiative and the current work plan of the GPC.

As a result of these agreements, working groups have been formed to address the tasks outlined. These working groups are actively communicating the progress of their work with each other and with the GPC. Progress will be reported at the second summit meeting in May 2010.

Role of the ABP and the ABP Foundation

One of the first challenges of this initiative was explaining the rationale for the ABP's interest in working with the international community. Because of the resources and expertise at its disposal, the ABP believes it has much to offer the international community that could enrich training and assessment of pediatric generalists and subspecialists. The ABP has

ABP	American Board of Pediatrics
GPC	Global Pediatric Consortium
R3P	Residency Review and Redesign in Pediatrics

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expressly stated that it cannot, and should not, be the sole participant or the central entity to carry out these activities. Once the initiative is established, the ABP will take an equal seat at the table with other organizations from participating countries.

The ABP Foundation's role is a bit different in that it is a granting arm of the ABP. Its mission is to fund projects that may not be within the core mission of the ABP, but that have the potential to improve the quality of care for children in ways that complement the work of the ABP. For instance, the Foundation's most recent multi-year project, the Residency Review and Redesign in Pediatrics (R3P) project, is an example of how the Foundation operates. The R3P has been a 4-year effort that involved a series of colloquia that brought together educational experts and thought leaders to discuss the structure and function of postgraduate training in the United States and what it might look like in the next 10 to 15 years. The Foundation provided financial and administrative resources to facilitate exploratory activities on behalf of the pediatric educational community. These efforts resulted in a series of strategic recommendations on the future of postgraduate training. The Foundation also facilitated discussions to find a permanent administrative home for this ongoing process. The result was the formation of the Initiative for Innovation in Pediatric Education, which is now functioning under the auspices of the Federation of Pediatric Organizations and is actively engaged in working with training programs to examine credible new educational pathways.

In an analogous way, the Foundation's role in the current international initiative is to provide support for a forum in

which to explore common global standards for pediatric training and accreditation. As with the R3P project, the international pediatric community will need to find a permanent home for this process to ensure its success and sustainability. The Foundation will work with the GPC and key international pediatric organizations, such as the International Pediatric Association and the International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association, to explore models of organizational and governance structure. The Foundation sees its role as initiating the process, funding the exploratory phase of the initiative, and then stepping aside to allow the international community to take ownership of this endeavor.

Conclusion

The international pediatric community has embraced the vision of common standards for training and accreditation. The shared vision is one of collegial collaboration for training and assessing the next generation of pediatric generalists. Raising the bar for training at the international level could result in a dramatic improvement in the quality of care provided by pediatricians worldwide. Although it is an ambitious vision, it is one to which all participants are committed. ■

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Appendix

The Global Pediatric Consortium member organizations and supporting organizations (*):

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Board of Pediatrics
Arab Board of Medical Specializations
Chinese Medical Association/National Medical Examination Center/Ministry of Health (China)
College of Paediatricians of South Africa
College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan
Egyptian Pediatric Association
European Academy of Pediatrics
European Board of Pediatrics (a subcommittee of the European Academy of Pediatrics)
German Academy of Pediatrics/German Society of Pediatrics
*International Pediatric Academic Leaders Association
*International Pediatric Association
Israeli Medical Association
Japan Pediatric Society/Japan Board of Medical Specialties
National Board of Examinations (India)
Paediatric Association of Nigeria
Royal Australasian College of Physicians
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada