



# Board Certified— What Does It Mean?

Yellow Page listings do not mean “board certification.” Nor do newspaper or magazine ads. Sometimes an ad claiming certification in a particular “board” reveals the “board” is really NOT recognized as such.

Listings of the “10” or “100 Best” doctors, lawyers or restaurants or cars or widgets or anything else usually means that these have *paid* for the plug.

To try to clarify these issues, I’ll quote liberally from the literature of the **American Board of Medical Specialties**. Afterward you should have no problem getting answers regarding board certification of any physician.

The **American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)** can trace its roots to the rise and growth of the medical specialty board movement in the early 1900s. This was associated directly with many significant advancements in medical science and the resulting improvements made in medical care delivery.

There was no system to assure the public that a physician claiming to be a specialist was indeed qualified. Each physician was the only assessor of his or her own qualifications to practice a given specialty.

The emergence of specialty societies and medical education institutions led to a more rigorous and organized approach, encouraging the formation of boards to define “specialty” qualifications and to issue credentials to assure the public of the specialist’s qualifications.

A specialty board concept initially proposed in 1908 formed the first specialty board, the American Board of Ophthalmic Examinations in 1916, and officially incorporated in 1917. In 1933 the name was changed to the American Board of Ophthalmology, establishing guidelines for training and evaluating candidates wishing certification to practice ophthalmology.

The next boards incorporated were Otolaryngology, then Obstetrics and Gynecology. In 1933 at a professional conference, it was decided that a national organization format would best serve the public in ensuring quality medical specialty care.

Thus was born the **American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)**, now with 24 specialty board members including Pediatrics, Orthopedic Surgery, Family Medicine, Pathology, Plastic Surgery, Surgery, Internal Medicine, etc.

The official ABMS internet site encourages consumer inquiries to determine the validity of any physician’s status either on its website at [www.ABMS.org](http://www.ABMS.org) or by phone at **1-866-ASK-ABMS (275-2267)**. There is no fee.

The inquiring individual must be sure the board certification investigated is specific to what is claimed. For instance, a physician board certified in plastic surgery usually would *not* be considered board certified for colon and rectal surgery. Similarly, board certification in otolaryngology is *not* the same as board certification in dermatology.

Since 1933, therefore, specialty boards have been approved jointly by the action of **ABMS** and the **American Medical Association**. The **24 Member Boards** of **ABMS**, including current contact information and website addresses, are:

*The American Board of Allergy and Immunology*  
phone: (215) 592-9466  
online: [www.abai.org](http://www.abai.org)

*The American Board of Anesthesiology*  
phone: (919) 881-2570  
online: [www.theaba.org](http://www.theaba.org)

*The American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery*  
phone: (734) 282-9400  
online: [www.abcrs.org](http://www.abcrs.org)

*The American Board of Dermatology*  
phone: (313) 874-1088  
online: [www.abderm.org](http://www.abderm.org)

*The American Board of Emergency Medicine*  
phone: (517) 332-4800  
online: [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org)

*The American Board of Family Medicine*  
phone: (859) 269-5626  
or (888) 995-5700  
online: [www.theabfm.org](http://www.theabfm.org)

*The American Board of Internal Medicine*  
phone: (215) 446-3500  
or (800) 441-2246  
online: [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org)

*The American Board of Medical Genetics*  
phone: (301) 634-7316  
online: [www.abmg.org](http://www.abmg.org)

*The American Board of Neurological Surgery*  
phone: (713) 441-6015  
online: [www.abns.org](http://www.abns.org)

*The American Board of Nuclear Medicine*  
phone: (314) 367-2225  
online: [www.abnm.org](http://www.abnm.org)

*The American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology*  
phone: (214) 871-1619  
online: [www.abog.org](http://www.abog.org)

*The American Board of Ophthalmology*  
phone: (610) 664-1175  
online: [www.abop.org](http://www.abop.org)

*The American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery*  
phone: (919) 929-7103  
online: [www.abos.org](http://www.abos.org)

*The American Board of Otolaryngology*  
phone: (713) 850-0399  
online: [www.aboto.org](http://www.aboto.org)

*The American Board of Pathology*  
phone: (813) 286-2444  
online: [www.abpath.org](http://www.abpath.org)

*The American Board of Pediatrics*  
phone: (919) 929-0461  
online: [www.abp.org](http://www.abp.org)

*The American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*  
phone: (507) 282-1776  
online: [www.abpmr.org](http://www.abpmr.org)

*The American Board of Plastic Surgery*  
phone: (215) 587-9322  
online: [www.abplsurg.org](http://www.abplsurg.org)

*The American Board of Preventive Medicine*  
phone: (312) 939-2276  
online: [www.abprevmed.org](http://www.abprevmed.org)

*The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology*  
phone: (847) 945-7900  
online: [www.abpn.com](http://www.abpn.com)

*The American Board of Radiology*  
phone: (520) 790-2900  
online: [www.theabr.org](http://www.theabr.org)

*The American Board of Surgery*  
phone: (215) 568-4000  
online: [www.absurgery.org](http://www.absurgery.org)

*The American Board of Thoracic Surgery*  
phone: (312) 202-5900  
online: [www.abts.org](http://www.abts.org)

*The American Board of Urology*  
phone: (434) 979-0059  
online: [www.abu.org](http://www.abu.org)



Dr. Joseph J. Bongiovi, Jr. has been certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery since 1973. He is also a member of:

• Fellow American College of Surgeons (FACS)

- American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)
- American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ASAPS)
- International Society of Clinical Plastic Surgeons (ISCPs)
- International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery (ISAPS)
- Rocky Mountain Association of Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeons (RMAPRS)

In addition, Dr. Bongiovi is licensed in Nevada, California, New Jersey, Idaho and New York. He has practiced exclusively in Las Vegas since 1970. To schedule a consultation, call (702) 733-7070.