

ABPMR

A MEMBER
BOARD
OF THE
AMERICAN
BOARD OF
MEDICAL
SPECIALTIES

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION

Booklet of Information

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THE AMERICAN BOARD
OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND
REHABILITATION

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Please note: The ABPMR reserves the right to change any information, including dates, exam format, fees, policies, procedures, and requirements, without prior notice or issuance of a revised publication. It is the applicant’s responsibility to seek the most current information. The most current information supersedes all previously published information.

The ABPMR does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, sex, race, religion, national origin, disability, or marital status.

Certification and the Practice of PM&R

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the ABPMR is to serve the public by improving the quality of patient care through a process of certification and maintenance of certification that fosters excellence and encourages continuous learning.

PURPOSE

The intent of the certification process as defined by member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is to provide assurance to the public that a certified medical specialist has successfully completed an accredited residency training program and an evaluation, including an examination process, designed to assess the knowledge, experience, and skills essential for quality patient care.

Standards of certification are distinct from those of licensure. Possession of a board certificate does not indicate total qualification for practice privileges, nor does it imply exclusion of other physicians not so certified.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPETENT PHYSICIAN

The competent physician should possess the medical knowledge, judgment, professionalism, and clinical and communication skills to provide high-quality patient care. Patient care encompasses the promotion of health, prevention of disease, and diagnosis, treatment, and management of medical conditions with compassion and respect for patients and their families.

GENERAL COMPETENCIES

- Medical knowledge
- Patient care
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Professionalism
- Practice-based learning and improvement
- Systems-based practice

DEFINITION OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE & REHABILITATION

Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R), also referred to as physiatry, is a medical specialty concerned with the diagnosis, evaluation, and management of individuals of all ages with physical and/or cognitive impairment and disability. This specialty involves the diagnosis and treatment of patients with painful or functionally limiting conditions, the management of co-morbidities and co-impairments, diagnostic and therapeutic injection procedures, electro-diagnostic medicine, and an emphasis on prevention of complications of disability from secondary conditions.

Physiatrists are trained in rehabilitation of neurologic disorders, in the diagnosis

and management of impairments of the musculoskeletal (including sports and occupational aspects) and other organ systems, and the long-term management of patients with disabling conditions.

Physiatrists provide leadership to multidisciplinary teams concerned with maximal restoration or development of physical, cognitive, psychological, social, occupational, and vocational functions in individuals whose abilities have been limited by disease, trauma, congenital disorders, or pain, in order to enable them to achieve their maximum functional abilities.

Introduction to MOC

Maintenance of certification (MOC) was developed by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and its 24 physician-led member boards as an opportunity to demonstrate physician leadership in the national quality movement through the establishment of competence-based standards and a rigorous process for physician credentialing. By following MOC, physicians live the standards by which medical care is evaluated and demonstrate their leadership in the national movement for healthcare quality. MOC also provides documentation for public accountability and credibility that can be used to verify that physicians are maintaining appropriate knowledge and training to practice PM&R.

Certification is a voluntary process by which the ABPMR grants recognition to a physician specialist who has met predetermined qualifications specified by the ABPMR. Certification and the certificate recognize those physician specialists who have successfully completed the ABPMR's educational requirements and demonstrated their skills and abilities at the time of evaluation. Certification is not a guarantee of the competence of the physician specialist. Requirements for certification are distinct from those of licensure. Certification and maintenance of certification are voluntary processes while licensure is a mandate that generally falls under the jurisdiction of specific states.

PROGRAM GOALS

Through its MOC Program, the ABPMR supports its diplomates' dedication to life-long learning. The ABPMR's guiding principle in this endeavor is to foster excellence in patient care and its intention is to encourage, stimulate, and support physiatrists' continuing education in the practice of PM&R.

The MOC Program permits diplomates to demonstrate that they continue to meet the requirements of the ABPMR as they keep current with changes in the specialty. It also provides assurance to patients and their families, payors, funding agencies, and the public that ABPMR diplomates maintain and continually improve their knowledge of physiatry. Diplomates achieve this through their ongoing participation in continuing medical education (CME), self-assessment, practice performance assessment, and by successfully achieving a passing score on the ABPMR MOC Examination.

TIME-LIMITED CERTIFICATION

Beginning in 1993, all diplomates are issued time-limited certificates and automatically enrolled in the ABPMR Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program. Diplomates are re-enrolled following successful completion of an MOC cycle resulting in the issuance of a new time-limited certificate in PM&R or applicable subspecialty.

NON-TIME-LIMITED (LIFETIME) CERTIFICATION

Diplomates who hold non-time-limited certificates are strongly encouraged to participate in the MOC Program and may enroll in the program by contacting the ABPMR office. Beginning in 2015, there are new requirements for non-time-limited primary certificate holders who are also ABPMR subspecialty certified to participate in MOC. For more information, refer to the [Requirement to Participate in MOC for all ABPMR Diplomates with Non-Time-Limited \(Lifetime\) Primary Certification and Subspecialty Certification Policy](#) and the [Requirement to Participate in MOC for Non-PM&R, Non-Time-Limited \(lifetime\) Primary Certified Physicians with ABPMR Subspecialty Policy](#).

SUBSPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

Subspecialty certificate holders are required to participate in the MOC Program for their subspecialty certificate. This includes participation in all four parts of MOC, including passing the appropriate subspecialty MOC Examination between years 7 and 10 of their certification cycle.

Maintenance of Certification Model

The ABPMR MOC Program has four components: professional standing, lifelong learning and self-assessment, cognitive expertise, and practice performance. In the MOC process, six competencies (below) are evaluated through these four components.

MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE

Demonstrate knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical, and cognate (eg, epidemiological and social-behavioral) sciences, as well as the application of this knowledge to patient care.

PATIENT CARE

Provide patient care that is compassionate, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health.

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills that result in the effective exchange of information and collaboration with patients, their families, and health professionals.

PROFESSIONALISM

Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to diverse patient populations.

PRACTICE-BASED LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Demonstrate the ability to investigate and evaluate the care of patients, to appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and lifelong learning.

SYSTEMS-BASED PRACTICE

Demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of healthcare. Be able to call on system resources to provide optimal care (eg, coordinating care across sites or serving as the primary case manager when care involves multiple specialties, professions, or sites).

The ACGME and the 24 ABMS member boards agreed to train and evaluate all physicians on six general competencies. The competencies are taught and evaluated during the residency/fellowship training experiences and throughout the diplomate's career as a physician specialist. The ABPMR MOC Program is designed to support and provide reasonable evaluation of the six competencies during a diplomate's career. The MOC process uses various self-assessment, quality improvement, and examination activities to achieve these ends.

Maintenance of Certification Requirements

MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION COMPONENTS

The Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Program is based on documentation of individual participation in the four components of MOC: 1) professional standing, 2) lifelong learning and self-assessment, 3) cognitive expertise, and 4) practice performance. Within these components, MOC addresses six competencies: medical knowledge, patient care, interpersonal and communication skills, professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, and systems-based practice.

COMPONENT I: PROFESSIONAL STANDING

In order to maintain ABPMR certification, diplomates must hold a current, valid, and unrestricted license to practice medicine. Failure to retain a valid, unrestricted license will result in the loss of ABPMR certification. Please see the [ABPMR Definition of Professionalism](#).

In the event that a diplomate's license to practice medicine is revoked, suspended, or surrendered, ABPMR certification will be simultaneously revoked. The diplomate must notify the ABPMR within 60 days and must immediately stop identifying herself/himself in any way, directly or indirectly, as a diplomate of the ABPMR. Failure to notify the ABPMR of any license revocation, suspension, or surrender

within 60 days after the effective date may result in sanctions. Refer to the ABPMR [Licensure Policy](#) and the ABPMR [Revocation or Suspension of Certificate Policy](#).

COMPONENT II: LIFELONG LEARNING AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Lifelong Learning: Overview

Lifelong learning refers to educational activities that serve to maintain, develop, or increase the knowledge, skills, and professional performance and relationships a physician uses to provide services for patients, the public, or the profession. These include the basic medical sciences, the discipline of clinical medicine, and the provision of healthcare to the public.

Formal continuing medical education (CME) is obtained through accredited CME providers such as specialty societies, universities, and commercial CME companies. CME providers must be accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), and/or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC).

ABPMR diplomates who are participating in the MOC Program of another ABMS member board may receive ABPMR credit for self-assessments completed through that ABMS member board. Refer to the ABPMR [MOC Activity Reciprocity Policy](#).

Lifelong Learning: CME Requirement

Diplomates are encouraged to complete and report Category 1 CME credits annually. Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued before 2012 must complete and report a minimum of 300 Category 1 CME credits during the 10-year MOC cycle. Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued in 2012 and beyond must complete and report 150 Category 1 CME credits in years 1-5 and in years 6-10 of their MOC cycle for a total of 300 category 1 CME credits during the 10-year MOC cycle.

Certificates of CME attendance for Category 1 CME activities should be retained by the diplomate in the event that the ABPMR requests verification.

Specialty-specific CME: A minimum of 50% of the 300 total CME credits should be related to the physician's specialty or subspecialty certification.

Category 1 credit involves activities designated by an accredited provider. A minimum of 300 credits must be met by the following types of CME experiences:

- CME programs of universities, hospitals, organizations, and institutions accredited by the ACCME and/or the RCPSC.
- CME activities offered by other accredited organizations such as the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), the Association of Academic Physiatrists (AAP), or the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AANEM).

- Category 1A and 2A credits from the AOA.

Category 2 credit may be reported for tracking purposes only and do not count toward the 300 credit minimum.

Lifelong Learning: Self-Assessment Requirement

Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued before 2012 are required to complete 4 ABPMR–approved self-assessment activities during the 10-year MOC cycle. Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued in 2012 and beyond must complete an average of 8 CME credits per year involving ABPMR–approved self-assessments for a total of 40 CME credits in years 1-5 and an additional 40 CME credits in years 6-10 of their MOC cycle.

ABPMR diplomates who are participating in the MOC Program of another ABMS member board may receive ABPMR credit for self-assessment projects completed through that ABMS member board. Refer to the ABPMR [MOC Activity Reciprocity Policy](#).

Self-assessment providers submit diplomate completion documentation to the ABPMR. Once the documentation has been processed, the required self-assessment box(es) on the **My MOC Status** screen will be updated.

A list of approved ABPMR self-assessment options can be found on the [ABPMR website](#).

COMPONENT III: COGNITIVE EXPERTISE (EXAMINATION)

This component consists of a cognitive examination covering all aspects of the specialty. The ABPMR primary Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Examination and all subspecialty MOC Examinations are computer-based, closed-book examinations. The examinations consist of multiple-choice questions related to clinical practice. For more information regarding the primary and subspecialty MOC Examinations, please refer to [Preparing for your Computer-Based Examination](#). For examination dates and fees, please refer to the [ABPMR Examination Calendar](#). You may apply for an MOC Examination by logging in to your Physician Home Page.

Currently, only the subspecialty Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine (PRM) Examination is reciprocal — ie, the PRM Examination may be substituted for the primary MOC Examination through 2018. The PRM Examination may be substituted for the primary MOC Examination because the broad-based content of both fields is covered by the subspecialty PRM Examination. After 2018, physicians will not be able to substitute the PRM Examination for the primary MOC Examination.

The primary and all subspecialty MOC Examinations are developed by ABPMR examination committees consisting of experts in the field. Each examination is constructed according to a content outline:

Primary MOC

Brain Injury Medicine

Hospice and Palliative Medicine

Neuromuscular Medicine

Pain Medicine

Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine

Spinal Cord Injury Medicine

Sports Medicine

Examination Results

Official notifications of examination results are sent in writing 6-8 weeks after an examination is administered. Pass/fail results will also be available on the individual candidate's "Physician Home Page" on the ABPMR website. In the interest of maintaining confidentiality of candidate information, examination results are not given via telephone, fax, or email.

Requests to have results mailed to a temporary or new address must be submitted to the ABPMR office in writing.

Maintenance of Certification Examination Prior to Certificate Expiration

A diplomate may take the appropriate ABPMR Maintenance of Certification Examination(s) beginning in the seventh year of the 10-year MOC certification cycle if he or she maintains active participation in the MOC Program.

If all MOC requirements have been completed, a new MOC certificate will be issued in the same year that the original certificate expires. The new time-limited certificate is then in effect for 10 years from the year in which the previous certificate expires, not from the date the MOC Examination is taken.

ABPMR Examination Irregularity Policy

All ABPMR certification examinations, including the content and wording of examination questions, constitute confidential ABPMR information protected by copyright law. Any unauthorized receipt, possession, or transmission of ABPMR written, computer-based, or oral examination questions, content, or materials, either before the examination, on site, or after an examination administration, is strictly forbidden. Use of ABPMR examination materials for the purpose of examination preparation or training is also strictly forbidden. Refer to the [ABPMR Examination Irregularity Policy](#), [Nondisclosure Policy](#), and [Cooperation Agreement](#).

Requesting Accommodations under the ADA

The ABPMR supports the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and makes reasonable accommodations in exam procedures for individuals with documented disabilities.

Applicants with disabilities may request modifications in the administration of any exam. The ABPMR will grant such requests unless the modifications would place undue burden on the ABPMR or would fundamentally alter the measurement of the knowledge and skills that the exam is intended to assess. Please refer to the ABPMR [Requesting Accommodations under ADA Policy](#) and [Application for Accommodations](#).

Withdrawals and Refunds

Please refer to the [Refunds and Forfeiture of Fees Policy](#).

COMPONENT IV: PRACTICE PERFORMANCE

The fourth component contains various activities designed to address quality improvement in practice.

Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued before 2012 must complete a minimum of 1 practice improvement project (PIP) during the 10-year MOC cycle. Diplomates with time-limited certificates issued in 2012 and beyond must complete 2 ABPMR–approved PIPs (1 in years 1-5 and 1 in years 6-10) during the 10-year MOC cycle.

ABPMR diplomates who are participating in the MOC Program of another ABMS member board may receive ABPMR credit for PIPs completed through that ABMS member board. Refer to the ABPMR [MOC Activity Reciprocity Policy](#).

Practice performance providers submit diplomate completion documentation to the ABPMR. Once the documentation has been processed, the required practice performance box(es) on the **My MOC Status** screen will be updated.

A list of ABPMR-approved practice performance options can be found on the [ABPMR website](#).

MOC REQUIREMENTS SUMMARY

The required activities are directly linked to the year in which an individual's certificate was issued. See table below:

Certificate Issue Date	MOC Component	Activities Required to Maintain Certification
Before 2012	Part I	Hold a current, valid, and unrestricted medical license to practice medicine throughout MOC cycle
	Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and report a minimum of 300 Category 1 CME credits Complete 4 ABPMR–approved self-assessment (SA) activities
	Part III	Pass the applicable MOC Examination(s) in years 7-10 of MOC cycle
	Part IV	Complete a minimum of 1 ABPMR–approved PIP
2012 - Present (Milestones)	Part I	Hold a current, valid, and unrestricted medical license to practice medicine throughout MOC cycle
	Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and report 150 Category 1 CME credits in years 1-5 and 150 Category 1 CME credits in years 6-10 for a total of 300 Complete 40 SA-CME credits involving ABPMR–approved self-assessment activities in years 1-5 and 40 SA-CME credits in years 6-10
	Part III	Pass the applicable MOC Examination(s) in years 7-10 of MOC cycle
	Part IV	Complete 1 ABPMR–approved PIP in years 1-5 and 1 ABPMR–approved PIP in years 6-10
All Groups	MOC fee	Pay MOC fees annually

CLINICALLY INACTIVE

Diplomates who have been clinically inactive (defined as having provided no direct and/or consultative patient care in the past 24 months) for five or more years during their 10-year MOC cycle will not be required to participate in Part IV of MOC (Practice Performance). All clinically inactive diplomates who wish to maintain their time-limited certification will be required to complete ABPMR requirements for MOC: Part I (Professional Standing), Part II (Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment), and Part III (Cognitive Expertise) at the same level as required for clinically active diplomates. The ABPMR must be notified of clinically inactive status. Refer to the ABPMR [Clinical Activity Status Policy](#).

If, during the MOC cycle, the diplomate returns to clinically active status, the diplomate must notify the ABPMR in writing. In addition, if the diplomate has been clinically active for five or more years during the 10-year MOC cycle, he or she must fulfill the Part IV requirements of MOC. Refer to the ABPMR [Clinical Activity Re-Entry Policy](#).

ANNUAL FEES

In addition to the above components, MOC participants are required to pay an annual fee, which is due by December 31st each year.

CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION

Diplomates' MOC participation status, as defined below, will be available to the public when using the [Certified Physician Search tool](#) on the ABPMR website. It will also be reported to the ABMS and publicly available on their [Certification Matters website](#). Refer to the ABPMR [MOC Continuous Participation Policy](#).

MOC participation status definitions for time-limited certificate holders:

A. Meeting MOC Requirements

Diplomate is actively participating in the MOC Program by making continuous progress on requirements.

B. Not Meeting MOC Requirements

By meeting one of the two criteria listed below, a diplomate may be declared as "Not Meeting MOC Requirements":

- Certificates issued before 2012:
Diplomate is at least five years behind on annual fee payments and/or CME reporting.
- Certificates issued in 2012 or beyond:
Diplomate has not completed all appropriate five-year milestones by the due date. The status of "Not Meeting MOC Requirements" may not affect board certification status, however it does limit access to ABPMR Online Services. In addition, a reinstatement fee is applied to any non-participant who wishes to resume participation in MOC.

When individuals who were making continuous progress encounter problems with CME or other requirements due to unforeseen circumstances such as a prolonged illness or military duty, exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Diplomates must notify the ABPMR office in writing of such circumstances.

Maintaining Subspecialty Certification

All diplomates who are certified in one or more of ABPMR's seven subspecialties must participate in MOC for their subspecialty certification. Thanks to reciprocity rules, MOC activities count toward both primary and subspecialty requirements, so the only additional step to maintain primary certification is passing the primary MOC Examination every 10 years.

NEW OPTIONS TO MAINTAIN SUBSPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

Beginning in 2015, the ABPMR is offering new options for maintaining certification. ABPMR diplomates with subspecialty certification may drop their primary PM&R certification and maintain subspecialty certification only. For more information, re-

fer to the [Option for Time-Limited ABPMR Diplomates to Maintain Subspecialty Certification Only Policy](#).

Also effective in 2015, ABPMR non–time-limited (lifetime) primary certificate holders who also hold subspecialty certification are required to participate in MOC for the subspecialty. For more information, refer to the [Requirement to Participate in MOC for all ABPMR Diplomates with Non-time-Limited \(Lifetime\) Primary Certification and Subspecialty Certification Policy](#).

Physicians who hold non–time-limited (lifetime) primary certification through an ABMS board other than the ABPMR, and who hold one or more ABPMR subspecialty certifications, must participate in MOC through either their primary board or the ABPMR. For more information, refer to the [Requirement to Participate in MOC for Non–PM&R, Non-Time-Limited \(Lifetime\) Primary Certified Physicians with ABPMR Subspecialty Policy](#).

Physicians with one or more ABPMR subspecialty certifications and time-limited primary certification through an ABMS board other than the ABPMR must maintain their primary certification in order to maintain their subspecialty certification. For more information, refer to the [Requirement to Maintain Primary Certification for Non–PM&R, Time-Limited Primary Certified Physicians who hold an ABPMR Subspecialty Policy](#).

REGAINING CERTIFICATION AFTER A CERTIFICATE EXPIRES

If a certificate expires, a physician wishing to reinstate must comply with the appropriate ABPMR reinstatement policy. For more information, refer to the [Maintenance of Certification \(MOC\) Reinstatement Policy for Primary Time-limited Certification Policy](#), the [Maintenance of Certification \(MOC\) Reinstatement Policy for Subspecialty Certification](#), and the [Reinstatement Policy for Primary Lifetime Certification](#).

The Certificate

CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE

The ABPMR will issue a 10-year, time-limited certificate to each diplomate who successfully completes the Maintenance of Certification Program. Prior to receiving a certificate, diplomates must complete all MOC requirements and pay all annual fees that are due.

All certificates issued by the ABPMR are subject to revocation or suspension. The ABPMR will not suspend or revoke a diplomate's certification without giving the diplomate prior notice and an opportunity to be heard and to respond. The ABPMR may report any suspension or revocation of certification to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the appropriate state medical licensing board. Refer to the ABPMR [Revocation or Suspension of Certificate Policy](#).

Certification Status

PUBLISHED LISTING OF CERTIFIED DIPLOMATES

Names and addresses of all successful Maintenance of Certification Program participants will be published in the Official American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Directory of Board Certified Medical Specialists published by Elsevier Science, St Louis MO, and other authorized ABMS publications. Names of those who do not successfully complete the MOC Program by the expiration date of their original ABPMR certificates will be removed from the ABMS directory until such individuals are reinstated to ABPMR diplomate status.

INQUIRIES INTO DIPLOMATE STATUS

The ABPMR provides information to the general public and others (ie, medical staff, credentialing bodies, and managed care organizations) about the certification status of a physician. The ABPMR will verify whether a physician is certified by the ABPMR, the date of certification, the certificate number, recertification status, and participation in the Maintenance of Certification Program. To protect the privacy of our current and former diplomates, the ABPMR will not give any further details of the physician's status with the ABPMR.

CERTIFIED PHYSICIAN SEARCH TOOL

ABPMR board certified specialists are leaders in their field because they participate in lifelong learning to keep their skills and knowledge current. They demonstrate their commitment to quality clinical outcomes, patient safety, and a responsive, patient-centered practice. Members of the public can use the [Certified Physician Search tool](#) on the ABPMR website to verify a physician's certification status. The Certified Physician Search tool is consistent with standards for primary source verification for physicians currently certified by the ABPMR. All certification information is drawn directly from our certification database. Only those physicians currently certified by the ABPMR will be listed in the search results. Note: The status of a physician is available three business days following the release of exam results and/or after the certificate is issued.

ABPMR Online Services

ABPMR ONLINE SERVICES OVERVIEW

Diplomates may use the ABPMR Online Services (www.abpmr.org) to:

- verify and update personal information
- view and print ABPMR e-communications
- apply for examinations
- view examination results

Diplomates use "My MOC Status" to participate in maintenance of certification activities:

- update medical licensure status
- view and report CME credits
- pay annual fee and print reports
- view self-assessment options and self-assessments completed
- view practice performance options and submit projects

REPORTING CHANGES OF INFORMATION

Diplomates are asked to update their Physician Information Page with any changes in mailing or email address, place of employment, or telephone or fax numbers. For name changes, official documentation must be mailed or faxed to the ABPMR (eg, a copy of the marriage certificate, driver's license, social security card, or divorce decree).

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Click on the link to view the complete ABPMR policy

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Revocation or Suspension of Certificate

ABPMR
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