American Board of Thoracic Surgery Report to the Thoracic Surgery Directors Association

SESATS X1 (11) is Available
The American Board of Thoracic Surgery (ABTS) is pleased to announce the released of the eleventh version of SESATS (Self-Education, Self-Assessment in Thoracic Surgery). SESATS XI (11) is currently a web-based program, but it will eventually be functional on all types of platforms, such as PCs, Macs, tablets, and smart phones. SESATS 11 will be similar to the previous versions in that it will contain 400 questions, critiques and readings covering all areas of thoracic surgery. The ABTS would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Dr. David B. Campbell (Hershey, PA) as the SESATS Editor-in-Chief for his tireless work on creating SESATS. SESATS is available for purchase at www.sesats.org.

New Electronic Payments Only
Starting in January 2015, the ABTS will only accept online credit card payments for the Annual Dues and Examination Fees. Acceptable credit cards include American Express, Master Card, and Visa.

New Pathway to Certification
The ABTS will now accept a full 5-year Vascular Surgery residency that has been approved by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in lieu of the general surgery requirement as a prerequisite for an ACGME-accredited thoracic surgery residency.

New MOC Part IV Requirements
The American Board of Thoracic Surgery has voted to replace the requirement for mandatory database participation with Performance Improvement starting in January 2016. More information about acceptable Performance Improvement Projects will be available on the Board’s web site in early 2015.

For those who do not participate in a Board approved database/registry, the Board will continue to require participation in the Professional Portfolio until the Performance Improvement process starts.

In August 2013, the ABTS joined the Multi-Specialty MOC Portfolio Approval Program. Quality improvement efforts involving ABTS-certified physicians in the field of thoracic surgery may now be submitted by approved Portfolio Sponsors for MOC Part IV credit through the Portfolio Program.

New Examination Sequence
The ABTS has established a new examination sequence for its candidates for certification that became effective for all residents graduating on or after January 1, 2014. The new
policy will limit the period an individual may be eligible for initial board certification to no more than seven years after completion of training. Candidates will need to apply for the examination within one year after satisfactory completion of their thoracic surgery residency. The Board considers the one year to include two registration cycles. Once approved, candidates will have three years to pass the Part I (Written) Exam and three years to pass the Part II (Oral) Exam. Candidates that enter the congenital surgery residency or other non ACGME approved fellowships are not exempt from this process. Candidates must certify within a total of seven years from the end of their thoracic surgery residency. The seven year rate will also apply to the congenital subspecialty certification process.

New Congenital MOC Booklet of Information
The ABTS recently approved a Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process for the subspecialty certificate in Congenital Cardiac Surgery. The Congenital MOC process will be similar to the current MOC process to maintain a primary certificate in thoracic surgery. A MOC Booklet for Congenital Cardiac Surgery is now available on the Board’s web site at www.abts.org.

Maintenance of Certification
In response to an initiative by the American Board of Medical Specialties, the ABTS implemented its Maintenance of Certification® (MOC) in January 2008. To date, approximately 2,500 Diplomates have successfully participated in the MOC program, which now includes completing 5-year and 10-year Milestones.

All Diplomates who are currently practicing, including those who hold life-time certificates, are expected to participate in Parts I-IV of the MOC program. In addition, Diplomates who hold Inactive Status are expected to participate in Parts I-III. Diplomates must hold a valid, unrestricted ABTS certificate to enter the MOC process. The only pathway for renewal of a lapsed certificate is to retake and pass the qualifying and certifying examinations. The Board has approved a plan to develop a specialty specific 10-year Milestone exam. Additional information about the 5 and 10-year Milestones can be found on the Board’s web site.

Board Web Site
The Board is in the process of rolling out a new interactive web site and portal for our Diplomates, Residents and the public. Currently, the new web site allows Diplomates to apply for the 5-year and 10-year Milestones of Maintenance of Certification. Residents are also able to apply online for certification. It is anticipated that most of the features will be up and running within a year.

Pathways to Certification
Eligibility to enter the American Board of Thoracic Surgery’s certification process may be achieved by completing one of the following four training pathways and fulfillment of the other requirements that can be found on the Board’s web site.
Pathway One is the successful completion of a full residency in General Surgery approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), followed by the successful completion of an ACGME-approved Thoracic Surgery residency. Successful completion of a 4/3 General Surgery/Thoracic Surgery Joint Training Program approved by the ACGME fulfills the requirements of Pathway One.

Pathway Two is the successful completion of a full 5-year residency in General Surgery, Cardiac Surgery or Vascular Surgery approved by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, followed by the successful completion of an ACGME-approved Thoracic Surgery residency.

Pathway Three is the successful completion of a six-year integrated Thoracic Surgery residency developed along guidelines established by the TSDA and approved by the ACGME (RRC-TS).

Pathway Four is the successful completion of an ACGME-approved Vascular Surgery residency that can lead to primary certification by the American Board of Surgery followed by the successful completion of an ACGME-approved Thoracic Surgery residency.

Examinations
The Board administered the Part II (Oral) Examination to 127 individuals on June 6-7, 2014. The pass rate for the examination was 72.4%. The next Oral Exam will be held on June 5-6, 2015 in Chicago.

The 2014 Part I (Written) Exam was held on November 17, 2014. The pass rate for the exam has yet to be determined. The next Part I (Written) Exam will be held on November 16, 2015.

Congenital Cardiac Surgery Subspecialty Certificate
The 2014 Congenital Cardiac Surgery Written Exam was held on November 24, 2014. The pass rate for the exam has yet to be determined. The next Congenital Cardiac Surgery Written Exam will be held on November 23, 2015.

The Congenital Cardiac Surgery Oral Exam was administered on June 5, 2014 for the fellows who were successful on the Qualifying Exam. The pass rate was 83%. The next Oral Exam will be held on June 4, 2015.

Applications for Certification
The deadline for submitting applications for the 2015 certification cycle is August 14, 2015. All requirements must be fulfilled at the time the application is submitted.

New Board Directors
At the 2014 Fall Meeting, Dr. David A. Fullerton (Aurora, CO) was elected to be the next Executive Director. Drs. James I. Fann (Stanford, CA) and Stephen C. Yang (Baltimore, MD) were elected to the Board of Directors.