



## ABPS Newsletter to Diplomates March 2022

*The mission of The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. is to promote safe, ethical, efficacious plastic surgery to the public by maintaining high standards for the education, examination, certification and continuous certification of plastic surgeons as specialists and subspecialists.*

### 85 years in the Public Trust

Included in this Newsletter is the Board's expressed appreciation for our diplomates who support the Board in its mission, examination updates with statistics, and contact information for the Board Office. Your input is welcome!

### Report from the Chair David H. Song, M.D.



*"The strongest steel is forged by the hottest fires. It is pounded and struck repeatedly... The fire gives it power and flexibility, and the blows give it strength. Those two things make it able to withstand every battle..."*

*-Sherrilyn Kenyon*

**Undoubtedly, we've experienced some of the hottest fires in our collective lives these past 2 years. With quarantines, masks, travel bans and many, many of our patients, friends, colleagues, and family members stricken with illness, it would be understandable if the duties and function of The American Board of Plastic Surgery retreated and retrenched into predictable safety and pause. However, the opposite happened and consistent with the very essence of our specialty, the entire ABPS pivoted, adapted and problem solved to not only survive the pandemic with the Board's mission intact, but evolved it into a more**

nimble and forward-thinking organization. On all fronts from the Written Exam, Oral Exam and continuous learning, the ABPS has harnessed these fires over the past 2 years to forge a steely resolve that has positioned us for success well into the future.

The Written Exam has continued to be administered at Prometric Test Centers in the United States and Canada with the highest level of confidence and security this past year. The pass rate continues to be consistent with historical rates, and the Written Exam Committee has used this opportunity of the pandemic to be more aware of questions that may carry implicit bias and stereotyping. The Board and its subject matter experts will participate in learning and training with the goal of enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the examination content. The ABPS looks forward to partnering with ABMS and leveraging the expertise of our Public Members and Directors to help shape an exam consistent with these goals.

While the Oral Exam was given virtually for the second year, we had a first in that we were able to administer the exam to a candidate from her hospital bed. Given our experience of providing the Oral Exam virtually last year, the Oral Exam Committee led by Dr. Peter J. Taub provided yet another example of innovative engineering in the midst of a pandemic. Previously, candidates who were ill or hospitalized obviously were not able to travel to Phoenix and thus forego their exam, but with our validated Virtual Oral Exam, a candidate that had been preparing for nearly a year was able to take the Oral Exam successfully under extreme circumstances...of course with her own physician's approval and full consent to the process irrespective of outcome. The ability to provide a world class exam consistent with previous exams remotely is yet another example of forging the steel of the ABPS in these unprecedented and trying times. How we adapt with this technology, expertise, and ability to execute the exam will now be the luxury of future Oral Exam Committee Members to ponder and apply. We are currently investigating how to proceed past the pandemic with these state-of-the art tools of examination now embedded within our overall armamentarium.

Continuous learning and the streamlining of the Continuous Certification process continues to be honed and advanced with painless mobile device directed questions and testing, a diplomate dashboard page on the Board's website ([www.abplasticsurgery.org](http://www.abplasticsurgery.org)) that provides the exact status of certification and what is required. Finally, the questions that are being utilized for this process are further vetted and

established. Current and future diplomates will have at their fingertips the most user-friendly way to maintain certification and to continue the process of lifelong learning.

As we all emerge from this dark period of our lives, the ABPS is looking forward to our strategic retreat helping to further position our Board on a higher platform for the future. The relevance and resonance of ABPS certification in the age of “Insta-fame” and “TikTok” notoriety will be just one of the strategic items that we will engage in to further create value for the Board’s diplomates and enhanced safety for the patients we serve and care for.

History will most likely view these past 2 years as some of the most trying and confusing in modern times but having been forged by the hottest of fires, I am confident that the steely resolve of the ABPS Board has only been enhanced and with the leadership of Keith E. Brandt, M.D. and all the amazing office staff, our Board is well positioned to face ever new challenges into the future...a future hopefully devoid of masks, quarantines and travel bans. It has been a unique honor to have served you during these times and I am even more inspired by those I serve with and their unending optimism, creativity, tenacity, and resilience.

Respectfully,



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**Peter J. Taub, M.D.**  
**Chair, Oral Examination Committee**

**The Second Virtual Oral Exam**

Thank you to everyone who helped navigate the current pandemic and still put on one of the most successful Oral Examinations in the history of the American Board of Plastic Surgery! For the second year, it was decided to administer the examination in a virtual format. Buoyed by the success of last year’s virtual exam, the members of the Oral Exam task force practiced and prepared just as diligently to ensure another valid exam. This year’s Oral Exam ushered in a number of firsts for the oral component. A transgender case was presented during the Theory and Practice session, a short video was added to augment one of the unknown cases, and, as Dr. Song reported, for the first time in the history of the Oral Examination, a candidate took (and successfully passed) the exam from a hospital bed!



Most of the technical questions that were posed before 2021 were answered relating to feasibility. While the examiners felt that an in-person exam offered a better

opportunity to gauge candidates' knowledge and familiarity with the material as well as to interact with their co-examiner, the candidates praised the savings of time and money as benefits of the virtual format. Despite having a successful exam in 2020, the Oral Exam task force met just as frequently in preparation for 2021 to integrate all ideas about the virtual format – from both examiners and candidates alike. Again, the Zoom platform was used to administer the examination and all participants remained at a location of their choosing, making sure that time zones were considered when scheduling both the examiners and candidates. With another 12 months of practice, all examiners proved they could administer a successful virtual Oral Exam. The process was left simple to minimize complications. Plenty of “tech checks” were scheduled with examiners and candidates alike to make sure everyone could log on to Zoom, navigate and share files, and annotate the images if questions arose. Over the weekend of the exam, a small group of Directors decamped to the Board Office in Philadelphia to manage the exam (and partake in Philly cheesesteaks).

This year, 209 candidates were tested by 110 examiners (with four alternate examiners available as needed) who were evaluated by 17 Board Directors. All 418 individual exam sessions were completed during the allotted time with no suspicions of security breaches. Examiners and candidates praised the format of the examination and the stability of the virtual platform. Small problems that arose were managed expeditiously. Eight unknown Theory and Practice cases were delivered on Saturday while the candidates' cases were reviewed on Sunday. For both 2020 and 2021, the validity and reliability of the virtual examination remained consistent with previous examinations. The pass rate of first-time takers for 2021 was 88.2%.

As noted, the security of the exam was unquestioned. Candidates were asked to attest to the ABPS Honor Code before the examination and again at the time of their Theory and Practice sessions. If any candidate was caught cheating on the examination, the candidate would not be permitted the opportunity to participate in a future examination forfeiting any chance at Board certification and the issue would be reported to the state medical board. Candidates were also asked to keep their testing location free of notes and performed a room sweep for the examiners to visualize their surroundings.

As we enter 2022, we anticipate returning to Phoenix to an in-person Oral Exam. The entire Board of Directors remain committed to using the Oral Exam to ensure public safety and confidence in member surgeons. In the coming months, the Board will decide whether future Oral Exams will look like those in pre-pandemic times, whether it will include a virtual aspect, or whether a new version will be implemented. We will keep track of how other certifying boards are proceeding as the pandemic risk recedes. Personally, I would like to welcome our newest certificate holders as colleagues, thank all the examiners and board staff who again put together a successful virtual Oral Exam and look forward to again having personal interactions that define our specialty and set us apart.

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## [2021 Oral Examiners](#)

### **Oral Examiner Pin**

**The commemorative Oral Examiner Pin was given to all Oral Examiners who participated in the 2020 and 2021 Virtual Oral Examinations.**



# Call for Oral Examiners

If you are interested in becoming an ABPS Oral Examiner, please refer to the guidelines for submission to the Board for review. You may e-mail [oral@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:oral@abplasticsurgery.org) with questions.

Oral Examiner Guidelines

## ABPS Statement on Misinformation related to COVID-19

The American Board of Plastic Surgery, Inc. is committed to protecting patients and prioritizing their welfare, based on scientific evidence. Misinformation or the misapplication of medical science by physicians undermines public trust.

The ABPS is concerned about the spread of misinformation regarding the COVID-19 virus. Misinformation can lead to vaccine hesitancy and disregard for the practical safeguards against infection, including masking and distancing.

ABPS board-certified plastic surgeons are committed to the highest standard of patient safety, professionalism, and ethical practice. Therefore, the spread of misinformation harmful to public health by an ABPS diplomate is considered unethical and unprofessional. An ABPS diplomate found to be promulgating such misinformation risks loss of certification by the ABPS.

The ABPS joins the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Medical Association, and other medical organizations in demanding that news outlets and social media platforms eliminate misinformation regarding COVID-19 prevention, transmission, and treatment. ABPS encourages the sharing of factual information regarding the value of vaccination and the promotion of proven virus mitigation methods.

### 2021-2022 Officers of the Board

**David H. Song, M.D.**  
Chair

**Michael W. Neumeister, M.D.**

## **Chair-Elect**

**Joan E. Lipa, M.D.  
Vice-Chair**

**Debra J. Johnson, M.D.  
Secretary-Treasurer**

**Keith E. Brandt, M.D.  
Executive Director**

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**[View 2021-2022 Directors of the Board](#)**

**[View Advisory Council Members](#)**

## **Thank You**

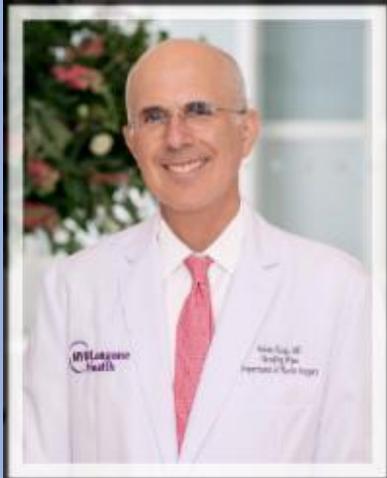
The Board would like to acknowledge the Advisory Council members, Oral Examiners and Item Writers for their continued dedication, hard work and significant contributions throughout the year. These individuals are crucial to the development of the Written, Oral, and Hand Examinations, as well as the Self-Assessment Activities.

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## **Congratulations to the New ABPS Directors!**

In May 2021, the Board elected three new Directors who were nominated by one of the 20 Sponsoring Organizations of the Board. Drs. Karp, Manahan and Oishi will serve from May 2021 to May 2027, unless elected as Chair. The Chair of the Board serves a 7-year term.

**[Drs. Karp, Manahan and Oishi's Bios](#)**



**Nolan S. Karp, M.D.**  
New York, NY



**Michele A. Manahan, M.D.**  
Baltimore, MD



**Scott N. Oishi, M.D.**  
Dallas, TX

## Special Recognition

**Thank you to our past Chair of the Board,  
who completed his term of service in May 2021**



**James C. Grotting, M.D.**  
2014-2021  
Birmingham, AL

Officer of the Board: Chair 2020-2021, Chair-Elect 2019-2020, Vice-Chair 2018-2019

Committees: Ethics Committee Chair, Oral Exam, Continuous Certification, Budget and Finance, and Aesthetic Surgery

**Thank you to our Directors who completed  
their terms of service in May 2021**



**William W. Dzwierzynski, M.D.**  
2015-2021



**Loree K. Kalliainen, M.D.**  
2015-2021

Committees: Written Exam, Hand Surgery Exam, Ethics, Representative to the Joint Committee for Surgery of the Hand Exam, ABMS COCERT

Committees: Credentials and Requirements, Oral Exam, Continuous Certification, Hand Surgery Exam, Representative to the Joint Committee for Surgery of the Hand Exam, Historian

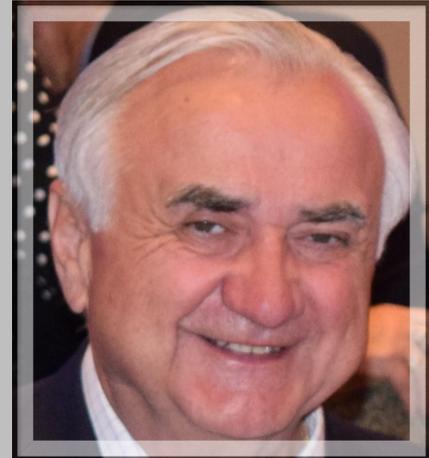
## Board's Legal Counsel Retires

Gabriel L. I. Bevilacqua, Esquire has retired after 27 years of representing the ABPS. Mr. Bevilacqua has served as the Board's legal counsel from November 1995 until February 2022.

Gabe has worked closely with many Chairs of the Board, Officers, Directors, Executive Directors and Board Office staff and has earned the utmost respect as counsel and colleague.

The Board would like to acknowledge and thank Gabe for his continued support, dedication and guidance over the last 27 years.

Gabe will spend his retirement with his wife Phyllis, two married sons and several grandchildren.



## Attention: Plastic Surgery Program Directors

[View the Board's Personal Leave Policy](#)

## 2022 Examination Dates and Locations

### Self-Assessment Activity

April 1, 2022 through April 30, 2022

(for both Continuous Certification and Hand Surgery Recertification)

### Hand Surgery Examination

August 2, 2022, Tuesday - Computer Based Test at Prometric Test Centers throughout the United States and Canada

### Written Examination

May 10, 2022, Tuesday - Computer Based Test at Prometric Test Centers throughout the United States and Canada

### Oral Examination

November 10, 11, 12, 2022, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

## 2022 Potential Examination Candidates

The Board will review comments regarding the suitability of any candidate for certification. Please direct written comments on official letterhead, signed and received in the Board Office by June 1, 2022. If you are aware of a potential candidate omitted from this list, please send an email to [written@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:written@abplasticsurgery.org) or [oral@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:oral@abplasticsurgery.org).

2022 Potential Written  
Examination Candidates

2022 Potential Oral  
Examination Candidates

## Congratulations to our New Board Diplomates

The ABPS certified 183 diplomates in 2021.

To date, the ABPS has certified 10, 040 plastic surgeons.

Approximately, 7,461 are in active practice. Of the total active diplomates, 17% are female.

2021 New  
Diplomates

## Diplomates who Successfully Completed the Continuous Certification Examination

In 2021, 188 diplomates successfully completed the Continuous Certification Examination. In addition, 5 diplomates used the Hand Surgery Recertification Examination to continue primary certification.

A total of 5,120 diplomates are currently participating in the Continuous Certification Program.

2021 Continuous  
Certification

## Diplomates who were Certified or Recertified in the Subspecialty of Hand Surgery

In 2021, the ABPS certified 38 diplomates and recertified 31 diplomates in Hand Surgery.

To date, the ABPS has issued 945 certificates in Hand Surgery.

2021 Hand Examination and  
Recertification

[View 10-Year Examination Statistics](#)

## REVOKED CERTIFICATES

To date, a total of 98 certificates have been revoked. The Board revoked one certificate in 2021.

## **SUSPENSION OF CERTIFICATION**

The Board reports certification status as “Suspended” based on State Medical Board sanctions resulting in a suspended medical license. The diplomate will be informed of this action by the Ethics Committee.

### **Thank You to Our Diplomates!**

The Board values each of our diplomates and appreciates your support in carrying out the Board’s mission to protect the public and to distinguish ourselves as safe, ethical, efficacious plastic surgeons who have met high standards in order to achieve board certification.

The Board actively communicates with our major plastic surgery societies, regional societies, and legislative bodies to maintain a presence and to communicate our mission.

We are proud of what our certificate represents.

### **Board Staff**

**Melissa A. Karch, MBA**  
**Executive Administrator**

**Maria K. D’Angelo**  
**Test Development Manager/Examination Editor**

**Gwen A. Hanuscin**  
**Written Examination and Projects Coordinator**

**Melissa M. Hill**  
**Oral Examination Coordinator**

**Stephanie L. Kash**  
**Continuous Certification Program and  
Hand Surgery Examination Coordinator**

**Sarah S. Praul**  
**Examination Associate**

**Cassandra Kosielowski**  
**Examination Associate**

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All communication and inquiries should be directed to the Board Office by emailing [info@abplasticsurgery.org](mailto:info@abplasticsurgery.org).

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Visit Our Website

Contact Us

