



The American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery

20600 Eureka Road, Suite 600 • Taylor, MI 48180 • (734) 282-9400 • Fax (734) 282-9402

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Website: www.abcrs.org

Email: abcrsadmin@abcrs.org

Dear Candidates:

As we watch cases of COVID-19 rise steadily and unpredictably across the US this summer, it becomes impossible for the ABCRS to responsibly consider gathering in Chicago this September to hold our annual Certifying (Oral) Board Examination. As an organization of professionals whose stated mission is to protect the health and welfare of the American people, we need to serve as models for this behavior. **Regrettably, this means temporarily deferring the examination.**

The results of the surveys sent to you were very clear—both candidates and examiners highly value prompt and timely testing and see the value of it. However, there was much concern regarding ensuring personal safety, the safety of others, and the practical difficulties and uncertainty that travel brings these days.

The current plan is to hold the Certifying Examination in March. The ABCRS is working on the logistics of doing this virtually, but the technical aspects of holding a secure, proctored virtual exam are complex. The recent experience of the American Board of Surgery demonstrated that a virtual exam can be accomplished, and technology is moving rapidly to create a secure, fair, “glitch-free” environment for the candidates and examiners alike, but unfortunately there are multiple challenges that still must be overcome to conduct the examination in this format. It has become clear to the ABCRS that we will not be able to hold the September examination virtually. We are committed, along with other boards, towards developing a virtual examination in the future, and will try to make this work as an option for the March exam, with an in-person examination in Chicago as an alternative, pending the status of the COVID crisis. Unless the ABCRS office is otherwise notified, Oral Exam fees previously paid will be applied to next year.

Thanks for your patience in this unpredictable time. As much as we are committed to the work and mission of our Board, the ABCRS is committed to the safety, health, and welfare of its members, both current and future, even more. The plan will be to update you in the coming months regarding the progress we are making for a spring examination.

Best Regards,

Najjia Mahmoud, President ABCRS

Glenn Ault, President Elect ABCRS

Scott Steele, Chair, Oral Examination ABCRS

Bruce Wolff, Executive Director ABCRS

