

# AOA Specialty Board Certification

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**The authors details information related to the 2012 certification processing activity of the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists, which oversees the work of the 18 specialty certifying boards of the American Osteopathic Association.**

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The Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists (BOS) (known as the Advisory Board of Osteopathic Specialists until 1993) was established in 1939 by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Board of Trustees to assess the skills of osteopathic physician specialists in response to the growth of specialization in the osteopathic medical profession.<sup>1</sup> The BOS views the certification process both as an assessment tool to enhance the quality of health care and also as a means to protect the public. Currently, there are 18 specialty certifying boards of the AOA.

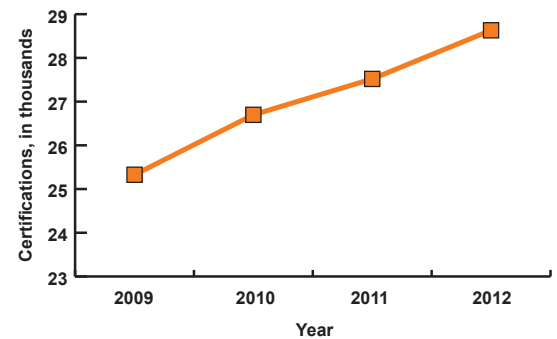
## AOA Certification Statistics

Since 1939, the BOS has issued 37,694 certifications, including primary specialties, subspecialties, and added qualifications. As of December 31, 2012, a total of 25,068 osteopathic physicians were currently certified by the AOA and held a combined total of 28,961 active certificates. In 2012, 1604 new certificates were awarded; 140 of these were certificates of added qualifications, and 38 were certificates of special qualifications. In addition, 936 recertifications were issued. A listing of the number of certifications and recertifications processed in 2012 and the total number of active certifications by specialty is found in the *Table*.

The number of active board certifications held has risen steadily over the past several years, as noted in the *Figure*.<sup>2-5</sup> With the increasing pressure by insurers and health care organizations for osteopathic physicians to hold board certification,<sup>6</sup> this number is expected to continue to rise.

## Conclusion

As previously noted, osteopathic certification helps ensure quality of health care provided by osteopathic physicians. The number of certifications grew in 2012, and we expect it to continue this upward trend.



**Figure.** Active certifications held, 2009 through 2012.

## References

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6. Shaw K, Cassel CK, Black C, Levinson W. Shared medical regulation in a time of increasing calls for accountability and transparency: comparison of recertification in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. *JAMA.* 2009;302(18):2008-2014.

**Editor's Note:** This *JAOA* theme issue on osteopathic medical education includes annual updates from the American Osteopathic Association's departments of accreditation and education. Last year's article on specialty board certification can be accessed online at <http://www.jaoa.org/content/112/4/226.full>.

(continued)

**Table.**  
**Certification Statistics, 2012<sup>a</sup>**

American Osteopathic Association Board of...	Certification Type	Description	New Certification	Recertification	Total
Anesthesiology	Primary	Anesthesiology	27 (2)	14 (2)	616 (2)
	CAQ	Pain management	0	2 (<1)	68 (<1)
	CAQ	Critical care	0	0	5 (<1)
Dermatology	Primary	Dermatology	67 (4)	0	464 (2)
	CAQ	Dermatopathology	2 (<1)	0	8 (<1)
	CAQ	MOHS micrographic surgery	5 (<1)	2 (<1)	24 (<1)
Emergency Medicine	CAQ	Emergency medical services	0	0	9 (<1)
	Primary	Emergency medicine	145 (9)	279 (30)	2331 (8)
	CAQ	Hospice and palliative medicine	3 (<1)	0	3 (<1)
	CAQ	Medical toxicology	0	1 (<1)	10 (<1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	0	6 (<1)
	CAQ	Undersea and hyperbaric medicine	3 (<1)	0	7 (<1)
Family Physicians	CAQ	Addiction medicine	0	0	4 (<1)
	CAQ	Adolescent and young adult medicine <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	8 (<1)
	Primary	Family medicine/OMT <sup>c</sup>	456 (28)	186 (20)	11,420 (40)
	CAQ	Geriatric medicine	4 (<1)	9 (1)	283 (1)
	CAQ	Hospice and palliative medicine	2 (<1)	0	118 (<1)
	CAQ	Sleep medicine	24 (2)	0	5 (<1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	4 (<1)	181 (1)
	CAQ	Undersea and hyperbaric medicine	5 (<1)	0	13 (<1)
Internal Medicine	CSQ	Allergy and immunology	0	0	9 (<1)
	CAQ	Cardiac electrophysiology	0	0	23 (<1)
	CSQ	Cardiology	7 (<1)	0	442 (2)
	CAQ	Critical care medicine	0	0	132 (<1)
	CSQ	Endocrinology	0	0	35 (<1)
	CSQ	Gastroenterology	4 (<1)	0	201 (1)
	CAQ	Geriatrics	2 (<1)	0	60 (<1)
	CSQ	Hematology	0	0	45 (<1)
	CAQ	Hospice and palliative medicine	30 (2)	0	48 (<1)
	CSQ	Infectious diseases	0	1 (<1)	61 (<1)
	Primary	Internal medicine	290 (18)	107 (11)	3317 (12)
	CAQ	Interventional cardiology	0	0	79 (<1)
	CSQ	Nephrology	0	0	23 (<1)
	CSQ	Oncology	2 (<1)	0	93 (<1)
	CSQ	Pulmonary diseases	5 (<1)	0	188 (1)
	CSQ	Rheumatology	1 (<1)	0	59 (<1)
	CAQ	Sleep medicine	16 (1)	0	50 (<1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	0	7 (<1)
	CAQ	Undersea and hyperbaric medicine	1 (<1)	0	1 (<1)

(continued)

<sup>a</sup> Data presented as No. (%). Percentages do not total 100 because of rounding. Totals are calculated by date of final approval by the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists. Data are current as of December 31, 2012.

<sup>b</sup> No longer issued.

<sup>c</sup> Previously named family practice/osteopathic manipulative treatment (OMT).

**Abbreviations:** CAQ, Certification of Added Qualifications; CSQ, Certification of Special Qualifications; NA, not applicable; OMM, osteopathic manipulative medicine; NMM, neuromusculoskeletal medicine.

**Table (continued).  
Certification Statistics, 2012<sup>a</sup>**

American Osteopathic Association Board of...	Certification Type	Description	New Certification	Recertification	Total
Neurology and Psychiatry	CAQ	Addiction medicine	0	0	2 (<1)
	CSQ	Child neurology	0	0	1 (<1)
	CSQ	Child psychiatry	1 (<1)	3 (<1)	40 (<1)
	CAQ	Geriatric psychiatry	2 (<1)	0	9 (<1)
	CAQ	Hospice and palliative medicine	0	0	2 (<1)
	Primary	Neurology	13 (1)	14 (2)	220 (1)
	CAQ	Neurophysiology	0	0	22 (<1)
	Primary	Psychiatry	10 (1)	8 (1)	277 (1)
	CAQ	Sleep medicine	9 (1)	0	15 (<1)
NMM	Primary	NMM/OMM	26 (2)	24 (3)	505 (2)
	Primary	Special Proficiency in OMM <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	126 (<1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	0	6 (<1)
Nuclear Medicine	Primary	Nuclear medicine	0	0	27 (<1)
Obstetrics and Gynecology	CSQ	Female pelvic medicine reconstructive surgery	2 (<1)	0	2 (<1)
	CSQ	Gynecologic oncology	2 (<1)	0	7 (<1)
	CSQ	Maternal and fetal medicine	8 (1)	1 (<1)	29 (<1)
	Primary	Obstetrics and gynecologic surgery <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	55 (<1)
	Primary	Obstetrics and gynecology	68 (4)	88 (9)	1082 (4)
	CSQ	Reproductive endocrinology	0	0	12 (<1)
Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery	Primary	Ophthalmology	22 (1)	9 (1)	346 (1)
	Primary	Otolaryngology and facial plastic surgery	23 (1)	7 (1)	390 (1)
	CAQ	Otolaryngic-sleep medicine	0	0	6 (<1)
	CAQ	Otolaryngic allergy	3 (<1)	1 (<1)	21 (<1)
	Primary	Otolaryngology	0	1 (<1)	11 (<1)
	Primary	Otorhinolaryngology <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	30 (<1)
Orthopedic Surgery	CAQ	Hand surgery	11 (1)	6 (1)	42 (<1)
	Primary	Orthopedic surgery	61 (4)	51 (5)	1141 (4)
	CAQ	Undersea and hyperbaric medicine	1 (<1)	0	1 (<1)
Pathology	Primary	Anatomic pathology	2 (<1)	1 (<1)	27 (<1)
	Primary	Anatomic pathology and laboratory medicine	0	0	15 (<1)
	CAQ	Dermatopathology	1 (<1)	0	2 (<1)
	CSQ	Forensic pathology	1 (<1)	0	4 (<1)
	Primary	Laboratory medicine	3 (<1)	1 (<1)	17 (<1)
	Primary	Laboratory medicine	3 (<1)	1 (<1)	17 (<1)
Pediatrics	CSQ	Adolescent medicine	0	1 (<1)	1 (<1)
	CSQ	Neonatology	2 (<1)	0	32 (<1)
	CSQ	Pediatric allergy and immunology	3 (<1)	0	8 (<1)
	CSQ	Pediatric endocrinology	0	2 (<1)	2 (<1)
	CSQ	Pediatric pulmonology <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	2 (<1)
	Primary	Pediatrics	44 (3)	31 (3)	511 (2)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	1 (<1)	0	1 (<1)

(continued)

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**Table (continued).  
Certification Statistics, 2012<sup>a</sup>**

American Osteopathic Association Board of...	Certification Type	Description	New Certification	Recertification	Total
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	CAQ	Hospice and palliative medicine	0	0	1 (<1)
	CAQ	Occupational medicine	1 (<1)	1 (<1)	51 (<1)
	Primary	Physical medicine and rehabilitation	16 (1)	1 (<1)	236 (1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	0	3 (<1)
Preventive Medicine	Primary	Preventive medicine-aerospace medicine	1 (<1)	2 (<1)	42 (<1)
	Primary	Preventive medicine-occupation medicine <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	8 (<1)
	Primary	Preventive medicine-public health	2 (<1)	3 (<1)	40 (<1)
	Primary	Preventive-occupational-environmental medicine	1 (<1)	7 (1)	88 (<1)
	CAQ	Sports medicine	0	0	1 (<1)
	CAQ	Undersea hyperbaric medicine	0	0	5 (<1)
	Proctology	Primary	Proctology	0	0
Radiology	CAQ	Angiography and intervention radiology <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	18 (<1)
	CAQ	Body imaging <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	9 (<1)
	Primary	Diagnostic radiology	42 (3)	30 (3)	669 (2)
	Primary	Diagnostic roentgenology <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	2 (<1)
	CAQ	Diagnostic ultrasound	0	0	1 (<1)
	CAQ	Neuroradiology	1 (<1)	1 (<1)	55 (<1)
	CAQ	Nuclear radiology	0	0	5 (<1)
	CAQ	Pediatric radiology	1 (<1)	0	21 (<1)
	Primary	Radiation oncology	1 (<1)	1 (<1)	20 (<1)
	CSQ	Radiation therapy <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	1 (<1)
	Primary	Radiology <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	54 (<1)
	CAQ	Vascular/interventional radiology	0	0	14 (<1)
	Surgery	Primary	Cardiothoracic surgery	2 (<1)	1 (<1)
CAQ		Critical care surgery	12 (1)	1 (<1)	63 (<1)
Primary		Facial plastic surgery	0	0	5 (<1)
Primary		General vascular surgery	2 (<1)	1 (<1)	121 (<1)
CAQ		Hospice and palliative medicine	0	0	2 (<1)
Primary		Neurological surgery	5 (<1)	2 (<1)	102 (<1)
Primary		Plastic and reconstructive surgery	1 (<1)	0	63 (<1)
Primary		Surgery (general)	86 (5)	28 (3)	1029 (4)
Primary		Thoracic cardiovascular surgery <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	53 (<1)
Primary		Thoracic surgery <sup>b</sup>	NA	NA	5 (<1)
CAQ		Undersea and hyperbaric medicine	0	0	1 (<1)
Primary		Urological surgery	10 (1)	3 (<1)	204 (1)
<b>Total</b>				<b>1604</b>	<b>936</b>

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