



American Board of Ophthalmology®

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN EYE CARE

Public Director Roles and Responsibilities

In 1999, the American Board of Ophthalmology decided to enhance its mission to serve the public through the addition of public, non-physician Directors to its Board. These individuals serve as advocates for the public with particular sensitivity to the need for high-quality health care delivered by Board-certified ophthalmologists. According to Article 2, Section 2.5 of the Bylaws, a public director will serve a four-year term, renewable once. According to Article 2, Section 2.11 of the Bylaws, a public director attends all meetings of the full Board as a voting member.

Characteristics

A Public Director of the American Board of Ophthalmology should:

1. Have an impeccable reputation for ethical behavior, integrity, and competence.
2. Be recognized nationally for his/her accomplishments.
3. Be a diligent worker who meets commitments promptly.
4. Be collegial and work harmoniously with others.
5. Have an open mind and be able to consider opposing points of view fairly and respectfully.
6. Support and advocate for the mission of the Board. Contribute to the ABO through public speaking, writing for the newsletter and website, and other activities.
7. Have knowledge of and experience with educational testing and the certification process, or be willing to learn.
8. Have the necessary writing, administrative, and organizational skills to successfully complete tasks likely to be assigned.
9. Be unencumbered by conflicts of interest (or be willing to eliminate existing conflicts of interest before joining the ABO Board of Directors).
10. Put the interests of the public and the profession ahead of her or his personal interests.
11. Understand and model key leadership attributes, including servant leadership.

Qualifications

Public Directors should have experience with one or more of the following:

1. designing or implementing health policy;
2. public opinion regarding health policy;
3. health care performance measurement;
4. science of quality improvement as applied to healthcare;
5. patient safety, operations science, and systems thinking;
6. patient-centered care, patient education, engagement, and empowerment;
7. survey methodology, especially as applied to health care utilization and quality;
8. database development and/or clinical registries;
9. electronic health records and their use in performance measurement and quality improvement;
10. not-for-profit finances, management, and governance;
11. patient advocacy;

12. medical ethics;
13. adult education and assessment.

Additionally, a Public Director shall have no current direct relationship to any other certifying board or the certification process.

General Responsibilities

Directorship requires a strong commitment to the mission and principles of the Board. The Board depends on Directors devoting sufficient time and energy to the responsibilities assigned to them.

A Board Director must be willing to commit to the following:

1. Attendance at in-person and virtual meetings that historically have amounted to at least 15 days of meeting time annually, including evenings and weekends. Additionally, Directors may be asked to represent the Board at regional or national meetings.
2. Willingness to accept multiple Board responsibilities and to fulfill commitments in a timely manner.
3. Willingness to become knowledgeable about the methodologies of skills and competency assessment, quality and safety measures and processes, adult learning modalities, the effects of new technology on the patient-physician relationship, and other relevant subjects.
4. Agreement to refrain from promoting, or permitting others to promote, his/her participation in commercial or educational activities (domestic or foreign) under circumstances that exploit, or might be perceived to exploit, his/her familiarity with examinations administered by the ABO or that otherwise might be perceived to compromise the integrity of those examinations or the credential of certification.
5. Willingness to serve a four-year term, followed typically by a second four-year term.

Fiduciary Responsibility

Board members are responsible for the financial accountability of their organization. ABO Directors act as trustees of the organization's assets and must exercise due diligence to ensure that the organization is well-managed and that its financial health remains sound.

As stewards of public trust, ABO Directors must be objective, unselfish, responsible, honest, trustworthy, and efficient. They must exercise reasonable care in all decision-making, without placing the ABO at unnecessary risk.

Although not all Directors are financial experts, each can be a financial inquisitor. It is essential to understand basic financial terminology, be able to read financial statements and judge their soundness, and have the capacity to recognize warning signs that might indicate a change in the overall health of the organization. To fulfill this responsibility, Directors may find the following questions helpful:

- Is our financial plan consistent with our strategic objectives?
- Is our cash flow adequate?
- Do we have sufficient reserves to fulfill our obligations as a not-for-profit organization?
- Are our expenses appropriate?
- Are any specific expense areas rising faster than their sources of income?
- Are we regularly comparing our financial activity with what we have budgeted?
- Do we have the appropriate checks and balances to prevent errors, fraud, and abuse?
- Are the ABO's finances conducted transparently and with integrity?