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[REDACTED], 20[REDACTED]

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Sent by Email and Certified Mail

### Re: Notice of Potential Disciplinary Sanction

Dear Dr. [REDACTED]

This concerns ABIM's investigation into your [REDACTED] ABIM Internal Medicine Certification Examination.

As ABIM previously advised you, ABIM determined through data forensic analysis that your [REDACTED] exam results were unreliable. The analysis took into account: (i) the similarity of your responses to those of other takers of the [REDACTED] exam, as assessed using the M4 index method;<sup>1</sup> (ii) your performance on exam questions that were common to the other forms offered during the [REDACTED] exam window ("common questions") compared to questions that were unique to the form of the exam you took ("unique questions"); and (iii) the difference in your response times for common questions compared to unique questions. For your [REDACTED] exam, your M4 index value was 6; you answered 90% of common questions correctly and 71% of unique questions correctly; and your response time for common questions (72.5 seconds) was 34.5 seconds faster than your response time for unique questions (107 seconds). The statistical likelihood of the observed response similarity, response times, and performance levels occurring by chance was determined to be less than 1 in 100 billion. By way of reference, there are estimated to be approximately 100 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

All of this information in the aggregate suggests that you had knowledge of the common exam questions prior to taking the [REDACTED] exam, and thus led ABIM to conclude that your [REDACTED] exam results were unreliable.

You passed the [REDACTED] exam with a score of [REDACTED] and are currently certified by ABIM in Internal Medicine. In light of ABIM's determination that your results were unreliable, you were required to retake the Internal Medicine Certification Examination on [REDACTED]. ABIM has held your results pending the completion of its investigation, but you received a failing score of [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED] exam. ABIM will release those results and you will no longer be board certified. If this process results in no sanction, you will be eligible to take the [REDACTED] exam. Otherwise, the decision in this disciplinary proceeding will determine your future eligibility for the certification process.

<sup>1</sup> D.D. Maynes, "Detection of non-independent test taking by similarity analysis," in *Test fraud: Statistical detection and methodology*, ed. N. M. Kingston and A. K. Clark (Routledge, 2014), 53-82; D.D. Maynes, "Detecting potential collusion among individual examinees using similarity analysis," in *Handbook of quantitative methods for detecting cheating on tests*, ed. GJ Cizek and JA Wollack (Routledge, 2017), Chapter 3, 47-69.

[REDACTED]

The *Examination Ethics* section of section of ABIM's Policies & Procedures for Certification (P&P), available on ABIM's website at <https://www.abim.org/Media/splbmcpce/policies-and-procedures.pdf>, provides:

Irregular or improper behavior in connection with assessments that is observed, made apparent by data forensics or statistical analysis, or uncovered by other means will be considered a subversion of the certification process and will constitute grounds for invalidation of a candidate's examination and subject the candidate to disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or revocation of Board Certification or eligibility to participate in the Board Certification or Maintenance of Certification processes. ABIM investigates all reports of irregular or improper activity. Failure to fully cooperate with an ABIM investigation is considered unprofessional conduct and constitutes grounds for disciplinary sanctions.

(See P&P at page 18.)

In addition, as set forth in the *Disciplinary Sanctions and Appeals* section of the P&P:

ABIM may impose disciplinary sanctions, including the suspension or revocation of Board Certification or participation in the certification or Maintenance of Certification processes, invalidation of an examination, or other professional sanctions, if ABIM obtains evidence that in its judgment demonstrates that a candidate or diplomate [among other things] . . . engaged in irregular or improper behavior or other misconduct in connection with an ABIM examination; . . . failed to maintain moral, ethical or professional behavior satisfactory to ABIM; . . . or engaged in misconduct that adversely affects professional competence or integrity.

(See P&P at page 18.)


Accordingly, ABIM's Credentials and Certification Committee (CCC) will determine on behalf of ABIM, at a meeting to be held no fewer than 45 days after the date of this notice, whether to recommend any disciplinary sanction against you. You may make a written submission for the CCC's consideration in connection with this matter. Kindly email your submission to [submissions@abim.org](mailto:submissions@abim.org) or mail it to ABIM at the address above. Please be advised that the failure to respond timely to this Notice may be considered unprofessional and weighed against you.

The CCC will consider all of the information available to it, including the results of the forensic data analysis described above, the information ABIM has obtained in connection with its investigation, your exam results and information on file with ABIM, and any further submission you make.

If the CCC recommends a sanction, you will have a right of appeal with an online video hearing before a panel designated by ABIM's Board of Directors. For more information about this process, please see the *Disciplinary Sanctions and Appeals* section of the P&P.

Respectfully,



  
Senior Credentials and Licensure Manager  
ABIM

