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## ABEM Appoints New Executive Director for Professional and Clinical Affairs: A Vision for the Future



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### ABEM Appoints Melissa A. Barton, M.D., as the Executive Director of Professional and Clinical Affairs

In January 2024, the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) announced the beginning of a search to identify an Executive Director of Professional and Clinical Affairs following the retirement of the current Executive Director, Earl J. Reisdorff, M.D., effective December 2024. At that time, the Board of Directors also determined there would be a new dyad model in their leadership with an Executive Director of Professional and Clinical Affairs and an Executive Director of Administrative Affairs. This new model will allow ABEM to accommodate the breadth of the work being done in the specialty of Emergency Medicine and to meet the needs of the physicians we serve.

The Board appointed an Executive Search Advisory Group comprised of board directors. They partnered with WittKieffer, a national executive search firm, to conduct a robust and extensive search process for the Executive Director, Professional and Clinical Affairs. WittKieffer held stakeholder interviews in Fall 2023 that helped inform the development of the position and the implementation of the process. Over the past six months, ABEM has conducted a rigorous and thorough process of reviewing applications and holding multiple stages of interviews with numerous well-qualified candidates.

The ABEM Board of Directors is pleased to announce that **Melissa A. Barton, M.D.**, will assume the role of **Executive Director, Professional and Clinical Affairs** on January 1, 2025. Dr. Barton joined ABEM in 2015 as its inaugural Director of Medical Affairs, focusing on certification activities related to residency training and subspecialty development. While at ABEM, she has also helped lead multi-organizational outreach activities, including the award-winning Dr. Leon L. Haley Jr Bridge to the Future of Emergency Medicine and the Coalition of Board-Certified Emergency Physicians. She has also led the review process for the EM Model and served as the ABEM liaison for the ACGME Residency Committee-Emergency Medicine.

Dr. Barton is board-certified in Emergency Medicine and has practiced for more than 20 years in Michigan, with her early career spent practicing at Detroit Medical Center (DMC) Sinai-Grace Hospital, a trauma hospital in northwest Detroit. Immediately following residency, Dr. Barton assumed the role of Associate Program Director and later Program Director for the DMC Sinai-Grace Hospital Emergency Medicine Residency Program. She also had a faculty appointment as a Clinical Associate Professor at the Wayne State University School of Medicine.

A member of the Michigan College of Emergency Physicians (MCEP) since 2004, Dr. Barton served as the MCEP President in 2010 and has remained engaged with the chapter.

Dr. Barton earned a B.S. in Finance from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a Doctor of Medicine from Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, and is currently completing a Master of Public Health from the Milken Institute of Public Health at George Washington University. She completed an Emergency Medicine residency at Sinai-Grace Hospital/Wayne State University and served as a Chief Resident during her final year of training.

"With a great foundation brought forward by Dr. Reisdorff, there is no doubt Dr. Barton's effective and diverse experiences in medical education and health care will continue to enhance and lead the development of certification opportunities and partnerships for ABEM. We are excited to begin this next chapter with Dr. Barton in her new role," said Diane L. Gorgas, M.D., Board President.

The Board of Directors is also pleased to announce that the current Chief Administrative Officer, **Kathleen C. Ruff, M.B.A.**, will become the **Executive Director, Administrative Affairs** as of January 1, 2025.

In her current role as Chief Administrative Officer at ABEM, Ms. Ruff leads the teams in accomplishing strategic initiatives, programs, and operations. Ms. Ruff works with Directors and staff on major initiatives such as initial certification redesign, Certifying Exam development, diversity, equity, and inclusion planning, training, and integration, value of certification communications and marketing, and systems and technology redesign and development. She also oversees strategic planning and projects, budget development, and NCCA accreditation

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compliance and activities. Prior to joining ABEM, Ms. Ruff was Chief of Staff and Senior Vice President for Board and Member Board Relations at the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). She also served as the Vice President for External Affairs and Special Assistant to the President for Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) and President of the NEOMED Foundation. Prior to her positions at NEOMED, Ms. Ruff served in several roles over 11 years at Drexel University. She received her B.S. in Business Administration and her Master of Business Administration from Drexel University.

"Ms. Ruff is a strategic and experienced leader and has made a tremendous impact on board certification. She brings a breadth of professionalism and innovation as well as a commitment to excellence that has made a profound impact on ABEM's success. We look forward to her expanding her strategic role in leading the future of the organization," noted Dr. Gorgas.

As ABEM looks to the future, there is much to be excited about as the board continues innovating and strengthening the specialty of Emergency Medicine.

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