UNITED COUNCIL FOR NEUROLOGIC SUBSPECIALTIES

2019

Year-End Summary

Mission

Provide accreditation and certification for emerging neurologic subspecialties with the goal of enhancing the quality of training for physicians in neurological subspecialties and the quality of patient care.

Introduction

With the strong leadership of the Board of Directors, the exceptional oversight of the Accreditation and Certification Councils, the subject matter expertise of the certification examination committees, and the dedication of the UCNS staff, the organization is proud of its accomplishments during the past year and looks forward to an exciting 2020.

Organizational Initiatives & Activities

New Board Leadership

The Board of Directors elected Paul Fisher, MD, to serve as Chair of the Board beginning May 1, 2019. Dr. Fisher represents the Child Neurology Society, one of the five UCNS parent organizations. He is a child neurologist at Stanford University Medical Center and is UCNS-certified in Neuro-oncology (NO). He will serve a two-year term from 2019-2021. Dr. Fisher replaces Dr. Ralph Józefowicz who served as Chair of the Board from 2016-2019.

UCNS Welcomes New Board Members

In 2019, the UCNS welcomed new parent organization board members Dr. Lawrence Wechsler, representing the Assocation of University Professors in Neurology, and Thomas P. Bleck, MD, representing the American Neurologic Assocation. New subspecialty sponsoring organization representatives joining the board in 2019 included Imad Jarjour, MD, representing the subspecialty of Autonomic Disorders, and Joseph Masdeu, MD, representativing Neuroimaging. Parent and sponsoring organization representatives are all nominated by their respective organizations and approved by the voting members of the UCNS Board of Directors.

UCNS Website Updated

The UCNS launched a newly redesigned website in September that features a fresh new look and increased functionality. Diplomates and users are now able to sign into the website to maintain their contact information, view certification and accreditation information, pay annual continuous certification (C-cert) administrative fees, and retrieve C-cert continuing medical education (CME) credit confirmation. Accredited programs may now update their Fellowship Directory listing and pay annual fees by signing into the website.

UCNS-Recognized Subspecialty Updates

Providing both accreditation and certification for emerging neurologic subspecialties, the UCNS is in a unique position to fully monitor and evaluate subspecialty growth and trends. All subspecialty data is evaluated annually by the UCNS Councils and Board of Directors, subspecialty sponsoring organizations, and certification examination committees. The 2019 UCNS Subspecialty Updates are now available on the UCNS website. The data is used to make determinations about the closing or reopening of the practice track eligibility pathway for certification, to make financial projections, and determine the overall growth potential of each subspecialty.

Measuring Progress

Progress towards meeting the priorities set by the Board of Directors are tracked on a scorecard of quantifiable goals and measures. The target goals are based on the numbers used to calculate the approved annual budget and from other benchmarking statics gathered from program annual reports and examination data. UCNS was successful in meeting or exceeding six of the seven 2019 goals set and approved by the UCNS Board.

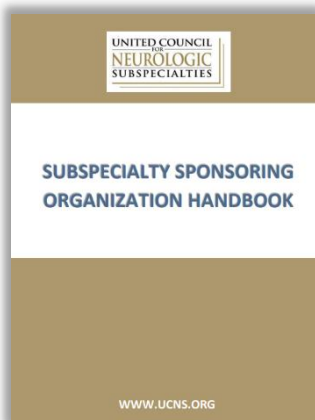| Ongoing Goals & Outcomes	2019 Target	2019 Yr End
Number of new program accreditation applications received	10	11
Number of accredited programs	207	202
Available UCNS fellowship spots	356	370.5
Percentage of UCNS fellowship spots filled^	55%	55%
Increase number of UCNS certified diplomates		
Number of initial certification applications received	197	276
Certification Exam Pass Rate (average)^	82%	84%
Number of recertification applications received^	n/a	n/a
Recertification Exam Pass Rate (average)^	n/a	n/a
Retention of eligible certified diplomates	50%	56%
Diplomates - Certified Not Meeting Requirements^	n/a	1,019
Total Diplomates - Certified Meeting Requirements*	1,975	2,140
Meet or exceed budget		
Net operating surplus (loss)*	($103,511)	$72,256

NOTES: ^ =measures not goals; *= number of diplomates who attested to meeting the C-cert CME requirements by year-end 2019 were considered Certified-Meeting Requirements.

Fostering Strong Relationships in the Neurology Community

In an ongoing effort to foster strong working relationships between the UCNS, American Academy of Neurology (AAN), and American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology (ABPN), representatives of the organizations come together annually for networking and updates. The 2019 meeting took place at the ABPN offices in the Chicago area and included Dr. Ralph Józefowicz, Chair of the UCNS Board, and Brenda Riggott, Executive Director, along with members of the AAN and ABPN leadership.

Subspecialty Recognition Changes for Two Neurologic Subspecialties

After careful consideration, the UCNS Board made the decision to sunset the UCNS subspecialty recognition for Neural Repair & Rehabilitation (NRR). Effective 2019, the UCNS will no longer offer certification examinations or accreditation for training programs for the subspecialty which has 23 diplomates and currently no accredited training programs.The Board also made the decision to no longer offer certification examinations for the subsepcialty of Geriatric Neurology, which has a total of 18 diplomates. The UCNS will continue to offer accreditation for the subspecialty's fellowship training programs. There are currently four accredited Geriatric Neurology fellowship programs and new applications are being accepted. Both subspecialties have the option to reapply in the future for reinstatement of subspecialty recognition.

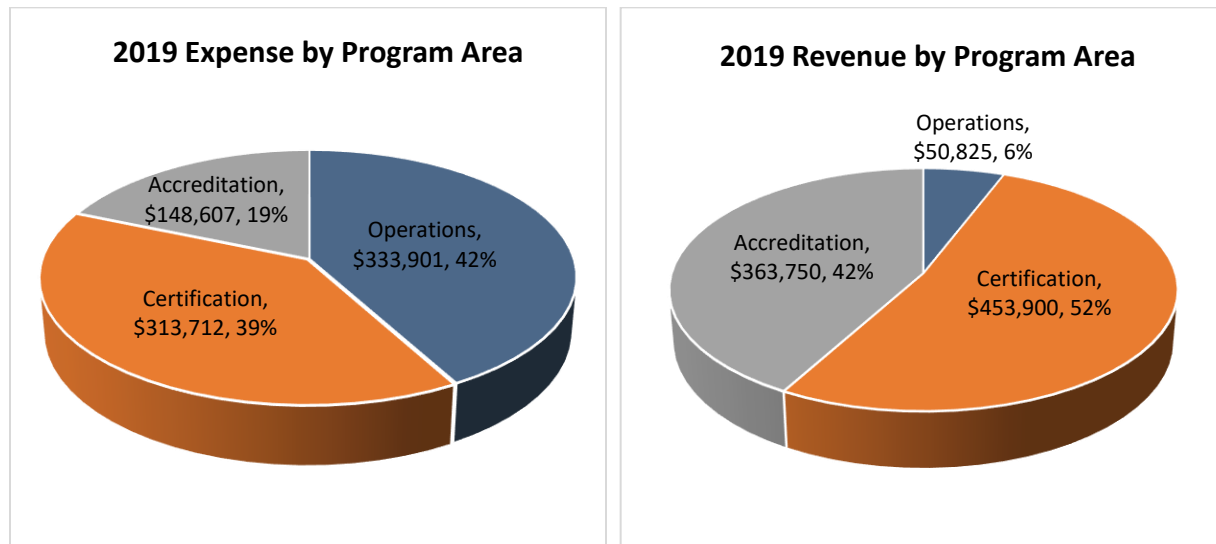**New Sponsoring Organization Handbook Provides Overview of Subspecialty Process and Benefits**

Subspecialty sponsoring organizations have an important role in the UCNS recognition process. From completing and sponsoring the initial subspecialty recognition application, identifying the subject matter experts who serve on their subspecialty certification examination committee, and proposing any subspecialty-specific changes to the subspecialty's certification eligibility criteria and fellowship training requirements, sponsoring organizations have an ongoing role in defining and representing their subspecialty. The UCNS recently completed a Subspecialty Sponsoring Organization Handbook that provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of sponsoring organizations.

Board Explores Opportunities in Strategic Planning Session

The UCNS Board of Directors took part in a Strategic Planning Session in conjunction with its September Board meeting. The focus of the session was, "UCNS - A look to the future outside the box." The Board was provided with foundational in-depth status updates of all accreditation and certification activities and survey/evaluation results along with financial considerations and projections for the coming year before embarking on the strategic discussion. The discussion points for the session included: 1) creating key talking points for certification and accreditation; 2) explore opportunities for expansion to new neurologic subspecialties; and 3) identify opportunities to strengthen the UCNS. Outcomes of the strategic discussions are integrated into the 2020 initiatives and budget.

Financial Update

The audited financial statements for the 12 months ending December 31, 2019, indicate the UCNS ended the year with a net surplus of $43,741. The positive bottom line can be attributed to better-than-anticipated interest and dividends, higher participant registration for certification examinations, and under-budget expenses. The year-end surplus means there was no need to utilize any restricted grant funds to balance the budget and a strong financial position for continued support of emerging neurologic subspecialties. The year ended with assets totaling $1,974,862, which is an increase of $116,962 from the previous year. The full audited financial and Form 990 reports are available on the UCNS website.

2019 Expense by Program Area

Accreditation, $148,607, 19%
Operations, $333,901, 42%
Certification, $313,712, 39%

2019 Revenue by Program Area

Operations, $50,825, 6%
Accreditation, $363,750, 42%
Certification, $453,900, 52%

Accreditation

Annual Reports Provide Valuable Data

UCNS-accredited training programs began submitting annual reports in 2016. The reports provide valuable insight into the programs by providing up-to-date information relating to the number of fellowship program spots available and the percentage of fellowship openings that are filled within each subspecialty. All annual reports and fellow survey results are summarized in the comprehensive *2019 UCNS Accreditation Annual Report,* which is available under the general accreditation downloads on the UCNS website.

Training Program Milestones Development

Training program milestones continue to be developed for use by UCNS-accredited programs. Modeled with permission after the Accreditation Council for Graduation Medical Education (ACGME) milestones, the UCNS common milestones were developed by the Accreditation Council and approved by the Board of Directors. The Neurocritical Care (NCC) and Headache Medicine subspecialty-specific milestones were approved and are being voluntarily piloted by numerous training programs. Committees appointed by Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP), NCC, and NO are working to draft their subspecialty-specific milestones. Following completion of these milestones, UCNS staff will begin working with the remaining subspecialties.
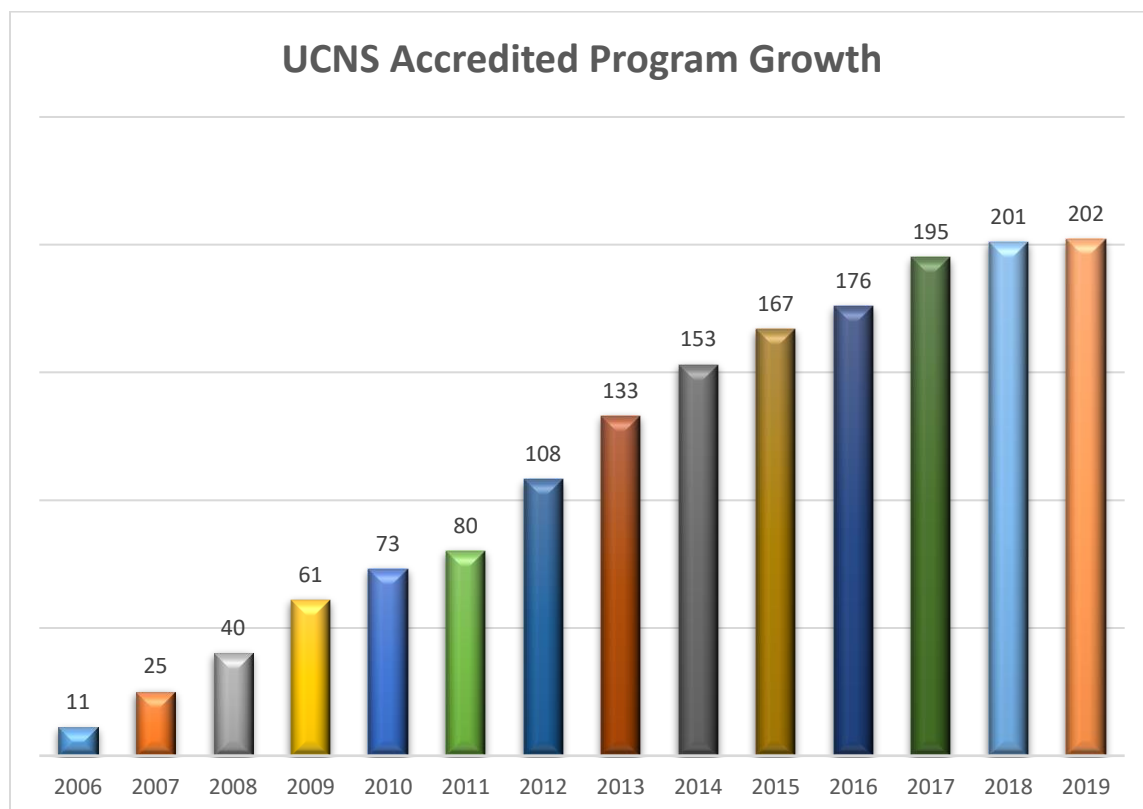
Common Program and Subspecialty-Specific Requirements Reviewed and Updated

Every five years, UCNS subspecialties embark on a review of their subspecialty-specific program requirements and the Accreditation Council does a thorough review of the UCNS Common Program Requirements. Each subspecialty sponsoring organization nominates three representatives to work on a task force on their behalf to review their subspecialty-specific program requirements. Though subspecialty sponsoring organizations may propose training programs changes at any time, the five-year task force review is mandatory per UCNS accreditation policy to ensure all subspecialty fellowship programs are current in their training requirements. Any proposed subspecialty-specific changes are reviewed by the UCNS Accreditation Council before being sent to the Board of Directors for their review and then sent for a 30-day subspecialty and parent organization comment period.

The UCNS Common Program Requirements are the core requirements for all UCNS subspecialty programs. To achieve and maintain UCNS accreditation, training programs must demonstrate substantial compliance with the program requirements. Updates to the common program requirements were announced in December 2019.

UCNS Accredited Program Growth

During 2019, UCNS added six new accredited training programs and lost five accredited programs for a net increase of one program, bringing the total of UCNS-accredited training programs to 202. The 2019 Training Program Annual Reports revealed that there were 370.5 fellowship spots available in the first year of UCNS-accredited training programs, with 55% filled.

UCNS Accredited Program Growth

Year	Programs
2006	11
2007	25
2008	40
2009	61
2010	73
2011	80
2012	108
2013	133
2014	153
2015	167
2016	176
2017	195
2018	201
2019	202

UCNS-Accredited Training Programs by Subspecialty				
Subspecialty	**2016 Training Programs**	**2017 Training Programs**	**2018 Training Programs**	**2019 Training Programs**
Neurocritical Care	61	68	69	69
Headache Medicine	34	39	42	43
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	34	34	35	37
Neuro-oncology	27	31	34	35
Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	6	6	6	6
Autonomic Disorders	5	5	5	4
Neuroimaging	5	5	5	4
Geriatric Neurology	3	5	5	4
Neural Repair and Rehabilitation	2	2	0	0
TOTALS	**177**	**195**	**201**	**202**

Certification

C-cert Approved for Implementation in 2019

Beginning in 2018, the UCNS Board of Directors approved moving forward with changing time-limited certification to a C-cert process. 2018 marked the final year the UCNS would offer a high-stakes recertification examination as part of maintaining certification. The Certification Council met monthly throughout the year to develop the details for the transition to, and implementation of, C-cert. With the implementation of C-cert, UCNS certification will be continuous when the annual C-cert requirements are met. The full details of the process and policy changes required to support the C-cert transition were presented and approved by the Board of Directors in March 2019 with the first phase of the transition beginning mid-year in preparation for full implementation in 2020. The news was announced in the March 2, 2019 press release distributed through the UCNS communication channels and emailed directly to UCNS diplomates.

New Testing Platform Supports Changes to UCNS Certification Process

To support the change to C-cert, the UCNS explored numerous testing platform options to find a system that could facilitate the high-stakes initial certification process as well as the low-stakes C-cert quizzes. The UCNS selected Yardstick Assessments Strategies (YAS) as the new third-party vendor that provides the full service testing platform, virtual proctoring, and the psychometric services required to administer the new UCNS certification and C-cert process.

UCNS Moves to Virtual Proctoring for Initial Certification Exams

In response to ongoing feedback from certification examinees, the UCNS sought to provide a more flexible and user-friendly experience for physicians by implementing virtual live proctoring for initial certification examinations. Previously, all certification examinations took place at Pearson Vue testing centers. In June of 2019, it was announced that the UCNS would be moving to virtual proctoring for all initial certificatoin examinations. "We heard the frustrations of physicians who were unable to schedule at testing centers when and where it was most convenient for them," said Paul G. Fisher, MD, chair of the UCNS Board of Directors. "Virtual proctoring will provide physicians with the flexibility and convenience they desire." ProctorU provides the virtual proctoring services that interfaces directly with the YAS testing platform. The weighted average rating of the virtual proctoring experience by 2019 certification examinees (n=212) was 3.16 on a 5 point scale (with 5 being the highest rating). The UCNS will continue to monitor examinee post-examination evaluations in an effort to make continuous improvements to the examinee experience.

UCNS Expands Certification Eligibility for Doctors of Osteopathy

Physicians who hold a primary certification by the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) are now eligible to apply for all UCNS subspecialty certifications. The UCNS certification general eligibility criteria for certification has been updated to include doctors of osteopathy (DOs) who have trained at an AOA-accredited residency program and are boarded by an AOA board. The change was approved by the UCNS Board of Directors at its December 2019 meeting and the change will go into effect for all UCNS-recognized subspecialties beginning with the 2020 subspecialty certification examinations.

Practice Track Application Eligibility Pathways Reopened for Certification

After careful evaluation of the subspecialty summary data, the practice track eligibility pathway for certification was reopened for NCC and BNNP. The reopening of the practice track went into effect for the 2019 NCC examination and is available for the 2020 BNNP examination. Practice tracks are now open for all UCNS subspecialties and the data is reviewed and evaluated by the Certification Council following the administration of each certification examination. This change also opens a pathway for the AOA applicants to apply for certification with the new certification eligibility for DOs.

UCNS Certification Examinations

UCNS ended the year with 3,159 diplomates. A total of 204 physicians passed UCNS certification examinations in 2019 and an additional 49 diplomates reinstated their previously lapsed certification.

2019 Initial Certification Examination Summaries

Subspecialty	Initial Cert Apps Budgeted	Initial Cert Apps Received	Initial Cert Apps Final	Candidates Passed	Pass %
Neuroimaging	15	16	15	13	100%
Neuro-oncology	31	63	63	46	74%
Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	17	9	9	9	100%
Neurocritical Care	134	188	184	136	78%
Totals	197	276	271	204	88%

Diplomate Counts by Subspecialty

Subspecialty	2015 Yr End Diplomates	2016 Yr End Diplomates	2017 Yr End Diplomates	2018 Yr End Diplomates	2019 Yr End Diplomates
Neurocritical Care	1,241	1,240	1,374	1,337	1,490
Headache Medicine	520	523	484	570	588
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	388	403	382	407	421
Neuro-oncology	207	207	240	236	285
Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	43	43	59	59	68
Autonomic Disorders	27	38	37	48	48
Neuroimaging	180	180	206	187	218
Geriatric Neurology	18	18	18	18	18
Neural Repair and Rehabilitation	23	23	23	23	23
TOTALS	**2,647**	**2,675**	**2,823**	**2,885**	**3,159**

Looking Forward

The UCNS is looking forward to a new era of C-cert and a more relevant model of life-long learning and knowledge assessment for its diplomates. Training programs will complete their milestones and we will continue to monitor the growth of UCNS-recognized subspecialties. The Board of Directors has set forth priorities for the organization that are progressive and responsive to the needs of practicing physicians in emerging neurologic subspecialties. There are many changes to come and the UCNS will continue to involve its stakeholders as we proceed through the exciting years ahead.

Ongoing Priorities:
- Raise awareness of UNCS certification and accreditation in the neurologic community
- Engage new subspecialties in seeking UCNS recognition for strategic growth of their subspecialty and development of quality standards for expertise and training
- Increase the number of UCNS-accredited training programs
- Increase the number of UCNS-certified diplomates
- Meet or exceed the annual budget

2019/2020 UCNS Board of Directors

Parent Organization Directors	Parent Organizations
Chair (May 2017-April 2019): Ralph F. Józefowicz, MD University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry	American Academy of Neurology (AAN)
Chair (May 2019-May 2021): Paul G. Fisher, MD, MHS Stanford University Medical Center	Child Neurology Society (CNS)
Secretary/Treasurer: Robert J. Baumann, MD University of Kentucky	Professors of Child Neurology (PCN)
Lawrence Wechsler, MD University of Pennsylvania Medical School	Association of University Professors of Neurology (AUPN)
Thomas P. Bleck, MD Northwestern	American Neurological Association (ANA)
Subspecialty Voting Member Directors	**Sponsoring Organization/Subspecialty**
Barbara E. Schildkrout, MD Harvard Medical School	*Sponsoring Organizations:* American Neuropsychiatric Association Society for Behavioral & Cognitive Neurology *Subspecialty:* Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry
Michael L. "Luke" James, MD Duke University Medical Center	*Sponsoring Organizations:* Neurocritical Care Society AAN Critical Care and Emergency Neurology Section *Subspecialty:* Neurocritical Care
Joseph Masdeu, MD Houston Methodist Hospital	*Sponsoring Organization:* American Society of Neuroimaging *Subspecialty:* Neuroimaging
Barbara J. Snider, MD, PhD Washington University	*Sponsoring Organization:* AAN Geriatric Neurology Section *Subspecialty:* Geriatric Neurology

2019/2020 UCNS Board of Directors

Subspecialty Non-Voting Representatives	Sponsoring Organization/Subspecialty
Jaishri O. Blakeley, MD Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine	*Sponsoring Organization:* AAN Neuro-oncology Section *Subspecialty:* Neuro-oncology
Noah L. Rosen, MD Northwell Health Zucker School of Medicine	*Sponsoring Organizations:* AAN Headache Medicine Section American Headache Society *Subspecialty:* Headache Medicine
Mazen M. Dimachkie, MD University of Kansas Medical Center	*Sponsoring Organization:* AAN Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology Section *Subspecialty:* Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology
Imad Jarjour, MD Baylor College of Medicine	*Sponsoring Organizations:* American Autonomic Society AAN Autonomic Nervous System Section *Subspecialty:* Autonomic Disorders
Ex Officio Non-voting Directors and Liaisons	**Organization**
Steven L. Lewis, MD LeHigh Valley Health Network	American Board of Psychiatry & Neurology
Laurie Gutmann, MD University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine	Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education - Neurology Residency Review Committee
Katie Fernstaedt Executive Director Association of University Professors of Neurology	AUPN
Nadine Goldberg, PhD, MS Executive Director American Neurological Association	ANA
Roger Larson Executive Director Child Neurology Society/Professors of Child Neurology	CNS/PCN
Catherine M. Rydell, CAE Executive Director American Academy of Neurology	AAN

UCNS Councils

Certification Council	Parent Organization
Matthew Fink, MD (Chair) Weill Cornell/New York Presbyterian Hospital Alireza Minagar, MD LSU Medical Health Sciences Center	AUPN
Darren Gitelman, MD (Vice Chair) Advocate Lutheran General Hospital Jun Li, MD Wayne State University School of Medicine	ANA
Nimish Mohile, MD University of Rochester Medical Center Melissa Ko, MD SUNY Upstate Medical University	AAN
Bruce Cohen, MD Akron Children's Hospital Howard Goodkin, MD University of Virginia School of Medicine	PCN
Sean Goretzke, MD Saint Louis University School of Medicine	CNS

Accreditation Council	Parent Organization
Eric Sorenson, MD (Chair) Mayo Clinic Rochester Louis Weimer, MD Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center	ANA
Holli Horak, MD (Vice-chair) University of Arizona Neil Graff-Radford, MD Mayo Clinic Jacksonville Katherine Peters, MD, PhD Duke University Medical Center	AAN
Angela Shapshak, MD University of Alabama at Birmingham Jennifer Kriegler, MD Cleveland Clinic	AUPN
James Owens, MD Seattle Children's	PCN
Christopher Oakley, MD Johns Hopkins Medicine	CNS

2019 Certification Examination Committees

Autonomic Disorders	Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry
Paola Sandroni, MD, PhD, Chair	Jonathan M. Silver, MD, Chair
Elizabeth Coon, MD, Vice Chair	C. Alan Anderson, MD, Vice Chair
William P. Cheshire, MD	David B. Arciniegas, MD
Roy L. Freeman, MD	Miles G. Cunningham, MD, PhD
David S. Goldstein, MD, PhD	Donald Eknoyan, MD
Phillip A. Low, MD, FAAN	Colin J. Harrington, MD
Peter Novak, MD, PhD	John Hart, Jr, MD
Brian Olshansky, MD	Robin A. Hurley, MD
Lauren Phillips, MD	Michael Schrift, DO, MA
	Kyle Steinman, MD, MAS

Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	Headache Medicine
P. James B. Dyck, MD, Chair	James R. Couch, MD, PhD, Chair
Yadollah Harati, MD, FAAN, Vice Chair	Paul Winner, DO, Vice Chair
Robert C. Bucelli, MD, PhD	Randolph Evans, MD
Andrea M. Corse, MD	Alan G. Finkel, MD
Praful Kelkar, MD	Deborah I. Friedman, MD
Justin Yuan-Ping Kwan, MD	Robert Kaniecki, MD
Steven Lovitt, MD	Christine Lay, MD
Michelle L. Mauermann, MD	Jerry Swanson, MD
Margherita Milone, MD, PhD	Stewart J. Tepper, MD
Aziz Shaibani, MD	

Neurocritical Care	Neuroimaging
Michael Souter, MD, Chair	Joseph Masdeu, MD, PhD, Chair
J. Javier Provencio, MD, Vice Chair	Marc Malkoff, MD, Vice Chair
Sayona John, MD	Carmel Armon, MD, MHS
Christos Lazardis, MD	Patrick M. Capone, MD, PhD
Susanne Muehlschlegel, MD, MPH	Neeraj Dubey, MD
Richard R. Riker, MD	Jerome Graber, MD
Robert Stevens, MD	Nazar Haidri, MD
John Terry, MD	Joshua Peter Klein, MD, PhD
Chethan P. Venkatasubba Rao, MD	Gustavo Rodriguez, MD
	Rebecca M. Sugg, MD

Neuro-oncology	
Nina Paleologos, MD, Chair	
Tom Mikkelsen, MD, Vice Chair	
Jeffrey C. Allen, MD	
Joy Ellen Burke, MD	
Howard Colman, MD	
Kurt A. Jaeckle, MD	
Yasmine Khakoo, MD	
Minesh P. Mehta, MD	
Douglas E. Ney, MD	
Roy E. Strowd, III, MD, MEd	

NOTE: Examination committee members are subject matter experts nominated by the subspecialty's sponsoring organization(s).

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