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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ABMS Joins National NQF Partnership To Take Action For Healthcare Quality Improvements

Evanston, Ill. - Nov. 17, 2008 - The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the not-for-profit organization that oversees U.S. physician voluntary specialty certification through its 24 Member Boards, today announced its support of the new National Priorities Partnership (NPP) at a launch event in Washington, D.C. The purpose of the NPP is to bring together leading national stakeholders to take action on coordinated priorities designed to advance safety and quality in the U.S. healthcare system. The NPP highlights the importance of providing the public and other stakeholders with standardized information on patient experience.

"Improvement in quality, safety and efficiency is vital in today's healthcare system, and I am pleased that the ABMS Board of Directors support and agreed to participate in this important partnership," said Kevin B. Weiss, MD, president and CEO of ABMS.

"Any effort to improve our nation's healthcare system must include ensuring that our specialty physicians are equipped to handle an evolving healthcare environment, innovations in delivery and changes in practice. That's why our organization is committed to this collaborative project, which aims to create measurable, ongoing improvements in healthcare to benefit all Americans," Dr. Weiss said.

Christine K. Cassel, MD, president and CEO of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), one of ABMS' Member Boards, serves as the ABMS representative to the NPP. Dr. Cassel, who chaired the NPP Working Group on Palliative Care, adds "The entire healthcare system needs to be actively engaged in providing healthcare capable of promising dignity, comfort and support to patients and families facing advanced illness or dying. NPP has shown great leadership in mapping out a plan for the country in this important area of care-delivery."

Joining forces with the National Quality Forum, who convened the effort, and 26 other national organizations on the NPP program is just one of many ABMS quality initiatives. ABMS announced earlier this year the approval of a new initiative designed to enhance public trust in physician performance assessment. The goal of the ABMS 2008-2011 Enhanced Public Trust Initiative is to boost the ABMS Board Enterprise's role as a trusted private sector agent taking action to ensure physician accountability and offer expanded resources to meet the public's need for reliable information when choosing a physician. ABMS is currently exploring a Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) program, which is a tool to seek patient survey input that will be used to help physicians improve their practice-based care.

"The support of ABMS and the nation's specialist physicians is critical to the success of the NPP program," said Janet Corrigan, PhD, president and CEO of NQF. "With ABMS as a fully engaged partner, we are one step closer to delivering consistently improved care to all Americans."

About ABMS

Now in its 75th year, American Board of Medical Specialties is the preeminent medical organization overseeing physician certification in the United States. It assists its 24 Member Boards in their efforts to develop and implement educational and professional standards for the evaluation and certification of over 700,000 physician specialists. ABMS Member Boards provide physician certification information to ABMS for its certification verification service programs. ABMS is recognized by the key healthcare credentialing accreditation entities as a primary equivalent source of board certification data for medical specialists. Patients can visit www.abms.org or call toll-free 1-866-ASK-ABMS to see if their physician is board certified by an ABMS Member Board. For more information call (847) 491-9091.

The 24 Member Boards that make up the ABMS Board Enterprise covers over 145 medical specialties and subspecialties include: American Board of Allergy and Immunology, American Board of Anesthesiology, American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery, American Board of Dermatology, American Board of Emergency Medicine, American Board of Family Medicine, American Board of Internal Medicine, American Board of Medical Genetics, American Board of Neurological Surgery, American Board of Nuclear Medicine, American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, American Board of Ophthalmology, American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery, American Board of Otolaryngology, American Board of Pathology, American Board of Pediatrics American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Board of Plastic Surgery, American Board of Preventive Medicine, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, American Board of Radiology, American Board of Surgery, American Board of Thoracic Surgery, and American Board of Urology.

About the National Priorities Partnership

The 28 National Priorities Partners represent key healthcare stakeholders, including: consumer groups, employers, government, health plans, healthcare alliances, healthcare professionals, scientists, accrediting and certifying bodies, and quality alliances. The Partners are: AARP, AFL-CIO, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, The Alliance for Pediatric Quality, America's Health Insurance Plans, American Board of Medical Specialties, American Nurses Association, AQA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology, Consumers Union, Hospital Quality Alliance, Institute for Healthcare Improvement, Institute of Medicine, The Joint Commission, Leapfrog Group, National Association of Community Health Centers, National Business Group on Health, National Committee for Quality Assurance, National Governors Association, National Institutes of Health, National Partnership for Women & Families, National Quality Forum, Pacific Business Group on Health, Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Quality Alliance Steering Committee.