

Q&A with HMDCB Certificants

The Hospice Medical Director Certification Board (HMDCB) launched its 7th initial certification application cycle January 7, 2020. Since its launch, more than 1,100 hospice physicians from across the country have earned the HMDC credential. Both full- and part-time physicians from a variety of practice settings have chosen to become certified. We recently asked several certificants about the value of the credential for their hospices and the field.



**Tommie Farrell,
MD, FAAHPM, HMDC**

Associate Medical Director, Hendrick Health



**Amy Moss,
DO, HMDC, FACO**

Executive Medical Director, Amedisys



**Michael Shapiro,
MD, HMDC**

Chief Medical Officer & Medical Director,
Cornerstone Hospice & Palliative Care



**Amir Tirmizi,
MD, HMDC, FAAHPM**

Attending Physician, Our Hospice
of South Central Indiana

Q: Talk about how this certification has benefited your hospice, patients, and/or partnership with your CEO?

TF: I already had a good relationship with patients and the organization, but this certification added a layer of pride for us to ensure our patients that there was a quality of care among our physician team.

AM: HMDCB certification has provided a tangible way to highlight and/or acknowledge not only my commitment to specialty

excellence but my organization's commitment to engagement with physicians recognized as exceptional in the delivery of hospice and palliative care.

MS: The HMDCB certification has greatly benefited our organization, and the patients and families we serve. It provides our clinical staff with a nationally recognized certification standard which signifies and highlights their expertise in end of life care. This allows for our staff and community to assure patients and families of the depth of

expertise being utilized in the provision of their personalized hospice care.

AT: HMDCB has significantly benefited our hospice by helping me understand the regulatory aspects of this field of medicine, which in turn ensures our organization stays in compliance. It also provides me with the tools to comfortably discuss the non-clinical aspects of care with patients and their families. Our CEO is glad to have me as an HMDCB certified physician on the team.

Q: If asked by a CEO/ administrator why they should get their physicians certified, what would you say?

TF: It shows a dedication to patients and families to say, "all of our physicians are certified in this field and really know what they are doing." I say that all the time to my patients in reassuring them that no matter which of my colleagues is on call, we are all certified.

AM: Physicians that are committed to ongoing professional development and specifically, HMDCB-certified, are best suited to meet the increasing operational, regulatory, and compliance challenges and clinical demands of the 21st century hospice and palliative medicine physician.

AT: I would tell them to get their physicians certified by HMDCB as this is the only exam that prepares us to learn not only the clinical care of hospice patients but also realize the important contribution of all the stakeholders involved in such care.

Q: Why do you think HMDCB benefits the hospice field?

TF: Patient care is the reason we are all here. Anything that raises the quality of the physician raises the quality of care for the patient. If all were certified I am certain we would see less of the negative examples of hospice in the media.

AM: It provides a level of standardization across HPM physicians that patients/families, employers, payors and policymakers can expect. In so doing, is a first step in demonstrating performance and outcomes expectations of the field are improved when undertaken by a HMDCB physician.

MS: It helps to recognize and standardize a large group of providers who have an extremely specialized skill set and knowledge base, that would otherwise be unable to achieve certification status.

If you are interested in learning more about how a certified hospice physician can positively impact your hospice, visit HMDCB.org/CEOs. Physicians can apply by visiting HMDCB.org/apply by April 13.



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