



AMERICAN BOARD OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD AND NECK SURGERY

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DIANA L. HARRELL

July 30, 2020

Dear Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Residents, Residency Program Directors, and Residency Program Coordinators,

On April 1, 2020, the American Board of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (ABOHNS) communicated temporary changes to our Board eligibility policies due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the ongoing challenges related to the pandemic, the ABOHNS decided to continue these temporary changes to include the current academic year that ends June 30, 2021. As a reminder, these are the temporary changes that remain in effect:

1) The ABOHNS recognizes that scheduled rotations for PGY-1 residents might need to change to best accommodate for the local situation at each institution. For the PGY-1 residents for the 2020-2021 academic year, the ABOHNS expects a minimum of 3 months of otolaryngology rotations and 3 months of non-otolaryngology rotations chosen from amongst the options described in the Booklet-of-Information dated July 2020. For the remaining 6 months, the ABOHNS will allow flexibility for the rotations at the discretion of the residency program director only if necessary to ensure best care for patients with COVID-19 at the institution. If changes need to be made to a resident's rotations that result in the usual requirements not being met, the Residency Program Director needs to inform the Board at the conclusion of the resident's PGY-1 year. No rotations will need to be made up as long as the minimum requirements described above are met.

2) The ABOHNS recognizes that Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery residents at all levels might be needed to provide care for COVID-19 patients. Clinical time dedicated to caring for patients with COVID-19 will be counted toward the training requirements for Board Eligibility. The Residency Program Director will need to inform the Board at the conclusion of the PGY-year about changes made to a resident's rotations to assist with the clinical care for patients with COVID-19. Additionally, the residency program director with input from the CCC will still be required to decide whether a resident has acquired/demonstrated the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to advance to the subsequent PGY-year or graduate from residency and enter autonomous practice if in the ultimate year. If a determination is made that a resident's training needs to be extended based on effects of the

COVID-19 pandemic on their Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery training/experience, then the ABOHNS requests being proactively informed by the program director of this decision as soon as feasible.

- 3) The ABOHNS recognizes that residents can be exposed to COVID-19 as they care for patients, which will lead to mandated self-isolation/quarantines. If an Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery resident requires up to 2-weeks of self-isolation/quarantine, this time will not count toward the 6-weeks allowed leave time for the PGY-year if the program arranges for the resident to complete academic/study activity during that time. The Residency Program Director will need to provide a written description of the academic/study activity to the ABOHNS. Extended absences (> 2 weeks) for residents that contract and require treatment for COVID-19 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In either circumstance, the ABOHNS expects that the residency program director will proactively inform the ABOHNS about the situation as soon as feasible.

Please inform Shannon Lamkin at sll@abohns.org or 713-850-0399 if you have any questions about this information.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the ABOHNS, I want to express my most sincere gratitude for all your contributions during these unprecedented times. Best Wishes for everyone's continued health and safety.

With Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Nussenbaum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being more prominent than the last name "Nussenbaum".

Brian Nussenbaum, MD, MHCM