

# SCAROP

May 18, 2020

Brent Wagner, MD  
President  
The American Board of Radiology  
5441 E. Williams Circle  
Tucson, Arizona 85711-7412

Re: Radiation Oncology Initial Certifying Exams

Dear Dr. Wagner:

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption across the entire health care and educational systems. As Department of Radiation Oncology Chairs of large academic medical centers, we all are adjusting to how to conduct patient care and business, and we understand the importance of safety. We support your decision to postpone the Board exams that were scheduled this July and appreciate your leadership in making this decision.

The SCAROP Executive Committee has since become aware of a dialogue the Association Residents in Radiation Oncology (ARRO) is having with you regarding how to best move forward with exams given the uncertainty associated with the novel coronavirus. The SCAROP leadership group recently convened a call to discuss this topic, and it was the unanimous opinion of the SCAROP leadership group that the ABR should move forward with both virtual written and oral exams. While we can appreciate that there are concerns about security, we could imagine that you could seek advice from other ABMS Boards who have researched this subject thoroughly and decided to move forward with virtual exams. As the entire US healthcare and educational systems have shifted to some form of online education, exams and virtual care/telehealth, we as an innovative, high technology field, have come to view the current system as needing flexibility during this COVID pandemic. We stand ready to work with you to facilitate virtual exams by proctoring written exams with departmental and outside faculty participation as ABR sees fit.

During our discussion, we also reached unanimous consensus that the three written exams should be consolidated into one exam. To our knowledge, there is no data supporting the rationale for the three separate exams, and we would note that diagnostic radiology recently consolidated to one exam. There is, however, significant opportunity cost associated with the time spent studying for the three separate tests. We think the field suffers for the time lost to studying for exams that could be spent on other important activities such as research. While the ABR

considers this question about how to offer exams this year, we hope you will further broaden the conversation to include the consolidation of written exams.

We appreciate that we are aligned in our shared goal of ensuring that practicing radiation oncologists have the requisite knowledge, skill, and understanding of the discipline to ably provide care to patients. We look forward to having an open and shared dialogue with the ABR.

Sincerely,

SCAROP Executive Committee

James Bonner, MD, Chair, University of Alabama and Chair of SCAROP  
Louis Potters, MD, FACR, FASTRO, Chair, Northwell Health and President of SCAROP  
Fei Fei Liu, MD, FRCP(C), Chair, Princess Margaret Cancer Center and Secretary of SCAROP  
Ben Movsas, MD, Chair, Henry Ford Hospital and Immediate Past Chair of SCAROP  
Yuhchrau Chen, MD, PhD, Chair, University of Rochester  
Adam Dicker, MD, PhD, FASTRO, FASCO, Chair, Thomas Jefferson University  
Shalom Kalnicki, MD, FACRO, Chair, Montefiore Medical Center

Cc: Paul Wallner, DO, Associate Executive Director for Radiation Oncology