

December 6, 2021

Chris Murphy
Executive Director
American Board of Wound Management
1800 M Street, NW | Suite 400S | Washington, DC 20036

Dear Chris:

I want to take a moment to thank you and the ABWM Board of Directors for the opportunity I have had to serve as the Public Member on the Board of Directors. I know that my term is nearing an end in the not-too-distant future, but I wanted to take a moment just to thank you all for the important work that you do and for valuing and engaging your public member.

As you know, public members are critical to the success of a board of directors, especially for such an important board as ABWM which must set and maintain credential requirements, assess candidates' knowledge and skills for certification, and move the credentials forward as the science progresses as well as engage certified providers to maintain and grow their knowledge and skills accordingly. I can assure you as a public member, this is of the utmost importance as ABWM plays a critical role so that the public at large, my family, my friends, and possibly you or me can rest assured that should we need state-of-the-art care for our wound issues that a ABWM certified provider will be well prepared to help us.

Given that, I certainly appreciate how the ABWM constantly strives to keep credentialing always at the state-of-the-art. This must be an extremely complicated and difficult task as new knowledge and new treatments come to light constantly with ever expanding biomedical and health research. While the exponential growth in knowledge can be overwhelming, I am comforted in knowing that ABWM requires annual renewal of its certified providers and requires periodic recertification. Not only does this protect the public in an ongoing and continually improving way, but it is also extremely beneficial to the certified providers themselves. For example, the renewal and recertification requirements help those certified providers know that their knowledge and skills are up-to-date providing them with confidence they need to do the tough jobs that they have.

The public member on the board of directors is right there to ensure that the board and organization always has the public-/lay-perspective. Through that opportunity, the public member can bring a perspective of the general population and what we might think about the certification process which ultimately impacts the care that we will receive. Knowing that ABWM cares deeply about gaining public input into their processes should be reassuring for our public at large, knowing their voice is being heard.

Probably most would understand those roles of the public member on the ABWM Board of Directors, but there are many other aspects to the position that many may not think of. For example, while the board focuses mostly on the credentialing issues that the organization faces, and truly there are many especially with the rapidly advancing knowledge base, the public member can bring some focus on non-credentialing issues. Seemingly simple questions from the public member could potentially be quite significant for the

board if the answers to those questions lead to the identification of risks or vulnerabilities for the organization or its certified providers.

In addition, public members obviously have lives and careers of their own, and often the expertise of the public member, which clearly in this case would not be in wound management, can bring additional knowledge and skills to the board of directors that may not otherwise exist. For example, educators might be perfect additions as public members to boards such as ABWM because they bring a knowledge and skillset in the area of teaching and learning—obviously critical for ABWM certified providers and the ABWM certification process. There are many other careers and professions that could bring unique perspectives and skillsets to the board as well.

All in all, I have found my time as a public member on the ABWM Board of Directors to be a win-win-win-win proposition. Most importantly, the public at large wins from having their voice heard in a critical credentialing process. Also, the organization wins as they get to learn from the public and the public member and incorporate those perspectives as they continually improve their processes. The certified candidates themselves win as they get the best process available and gain the reassurance that their knowledge and skills are up to date. And, not so altruistically, I won personally as it enriched my own life as I learned from the wealth of knowledge and experience you and the other board members and former board members have shared with me.

Thanks for taking the time to read my thoughts and to accept my gratitude. I wish the ABWM and Board of Directors the best always, and I remain in your service at any point in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell B. Melchert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Russell B. Melchert, PhD, RPh
Dean & Professor