Importance of vascular surgery
“leadership” support in the establishment of an independent board

O. William Brown, MD, JD
William Beaumont Health System

• No financial disclosures

• The necessity of an independent board has been debated for over 20 years
• By now, most vascular surgeons should have decided whether or not they support such a board
• Surveys show overwhelming support

• Vascular surgeons have been told that they are “independent”
• The recent denial of a separate residency review committee for vascular surgery
• The need for approval by the ABS undermines that assertion

• Most vascular surgeons, including many members of the leadership of both national and regional societies have verbally expressed support for the establishment of an independent American Board of Vascular Surgery

However, documented support for an independent American Board of Vascular Surgery by this leadership has not been forthcoming
• Need for unanimous leadership support is Critical

'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.'

(George Santayana-1905)

Reasons for denial

• Proposal for an independent board “does not enjoy the unalloyed support of many of the senior leaders of the vascular surgical community”

• American Board of Thoracic Surgery was the product of long and strenuous debate
• Certification first discussed by AATS in 1936
• Overwhelming support by membership

• Certification in thoracic surgery began as an addition to certification in general surgery

• Why hasn’t vascular surgery progressed to the establishment of a separate board?
Continuing steps towards an independent board

Reorganization of the American Board of Surgery

Reorganization of ABS
- Overriding board to oversee the day to day activities including legal and fiscal matters
- Several specialty boards to independently oversee the certification of candidates
- Specialty boards also oversee training of candidates in conjunction with the ACGME and the SVS
- Approval of ABS not necessary for VSB decisions

Reorganization of American Board of Surgery has resulted in a “wait and see” approach by the vascular surgery leadership

Should the reorganization of the American Board of Surgery prove to be a viable alternative to the establishment of an independent board, the issue becomes moot

IF NOT:
- Documented support of the national and regional societies and the American Board of Surgery is essential
- Once in place, an application should be refiled and allowed to progress “through the system”
• However, as in surgery, before filing the application, a “what if plan” should be developed
• If the application is rejected what are next steps??

The time to discuss the need for the establishment of an independent American Board of Vascular Surgery is over