



Chief Operating Officer American Board of Neurological Surgery

THE SEARCH

The American Board of Neurological Surgery (ABNS) seeks a dynamic, strategic, and operationally savvy leader to serve as its Chief Operating Officer (COO). Founded in 1940, the ABNS is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the science and practice of neurological surgery to serve the cause of public health. As one of 24 certifying boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the ABNS is the nation's leading accrediting body for neurosurgery certification, supporting over 6,300 active diplomates.

At a time of rapid clinical and technological innovation, the ABNS is uniquely positioned to elevate education, training, and certification standards for the next generation of neurosurgeons. The organization's certification process, which includes rigorous written and oral examinations and an adaptive learning tool for continuing certification, reflects its commitment to excellence. Looking ahead, the ABNS aims to foster innovation by integrating research, real-world practice, and education, creating a comprehensive pipeline that spans residency, fellowship, board certification, and lifelong professional development. The COO will drive this mission forward, working closely with the ABNS's Board of Directors, its Executive Committee, and its Executive Director to implement strategic priorities that foster innovation and professional excellence. The COO will report directly to the Executive Director and also have a "dotted line" reporting relationship to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors.

As the operational leader of the ABNS, the COO will oversee the organization's administrative, business, financial, and human resource functions, aligning internal processes with the organization's mission and strategic priorities. They will bring a collaborative and results-driven mindset and a strategic focus on developing new as well as streamlining existing internal policies and operations to enhance efficiency and support the ABNS's growth. This will require assessing and strengthening internal systems, developing impactful partnerships with fellow medical boards and training organizations, and enhancing the ABNS's reputation as the forefront of neurosurgical certification and education.

Through innovative strategies, operational excellence, and a commitment to continuous improvement, the COO will help ABNS set new benchmarks for excellence in neurosurgical education and certification.

This is an exciting opportunity to join a mission-driven organization dedicated to creating a lasting impact on a field dedicated to advancing science, improving patient outcomes, and shaping the future of neurological surgery.

The ABNS has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this recruitment. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE AMERICAN BOARD OF NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY

The ABNS is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing specialized training and certification for neurosurgeons and one of 24 member certifying boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The ABNS also supports the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery (ABPNS) with its administrative duties. The ABNS works collaboratively with fellow ABMS boards, neurosurgical organizations such as the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), Congress of Neurological Surgeons, Academy of Neurological Surgery (AAcNS), Neurosurgical Society of America (NSA) and the Society of Neurological Surgeons (SNS), and institutions like the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to uphold and enhance standards in neurosurgical training and practice.

The mission of the ABNS is to encourage the study, improve the practice, elevate the standards, and advance the science of neurological surgery to serve the cause of public health. The ABNS does this through:

1. Defining requirements for training in neurological surgery
2. Developing and administering written and oral examinations for initial certification
3. Evaluating the credentials of candidates for certification, including professional practice
4. Issuing certificates to candidates who successfully complete the initial certification process (who then become “Diplomates” of the Board).
5. Defining the requirements for continuing certification (CC) in neurological surgery
6. Tracking diplomates progress through CC
7. Issuing renewal certificates to Diplomates who annually complete all CC requirements over a ten year cycle.
8. Taking disciplinary measures against Diplomates who violate ABNS rules or engage in certain misconduct.

Through these efforts, the ABNS ensures that neurosurgeons are well-prepared to meet the evolving demands of the profession while upholding the highest standards of patient care and public trust.

Governance, Organization, & Finances

The ABNS is governed by a 15-member board of directors and officers comprised of practicing neurosurgeons who are acknowledged leaders in the profession. Board members are nominated from within the ABNS and by leading neurological societies, including the AAcNS, AANS, CNS, NSA, ABPNS/American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons (ASPN), and SNS. Board members serve on a volunteer basis, without pay, and serve two consecutive 3-year term. To maintain continuity, board

appointments are staggered, with two to three new directors elected each year. Since its founding, approximately 220 neurosurgeons have served as directors, lending their expertise to advance the field. In October 2024, Dr. Marjorie Wang became the permanent Executive Director of the ABNS, commencing a six-year term after serving as interim Executive Director. Dr. Wang previously served as Director and then Chair of the Board.

The ABNS is currently supported by a dedicated team of six highly skilled professionals who will report directly to the COO. These key positions include the Continuing Certification and Recognition of Focused Practice Designation Administrator, Operations & Residency Program Administrator, ABPNS Administrator, Certification Administrator, ABNS/CAST Administrator, and IT Manager. The COO will develop and strengthen this team and ensure its continued growth and alignment with ABNS's strategic goals.

Operating with a solid financial foundation, the ABNS has an annual budget of approximately \$5M and maintains adequate financial reserves which can be utilized as needed. Revenue is generated through initial and continuing certification fees and annual dues.

THE ROLE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The COO serves as a key member of the ABNS leadership team and will oversee the day-to-day management of the ABNS's administrative, business, financial, operational, and human resource functions. Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the COO plays a vital role in advancing the ABNS mission to elevate the standards of neurosurgery through innovative certification, education, and training programs. This position encompasses a broad scope of responsibilities, including staff oversight, operational performance, certification program administration, and compliance with regulatory standards.

As a strategist and thought partner, the COO will work closely with the Executive Director and Board of Directors to develop and execute strategies that enhance the candidate and Diplomate experience and promote lifelong professional development. Central to this effort is the oversight of the certification process, ensuring that examinations, materials, and ongoing certification requirements are communicated effectively and administered seamlessly. The COO will also ensure that the Board remains responsive and well-informed, staying attuned to candidates' and Diplomates' evolving needs and concerns to ensure that ABNS continues to meet its mission with relevance and impact.

During this period of growth and transformation, the COO will lead efforts to identify and implement innovative advancements in neurosurgical education and certification. This includes exploring and integrating new technologies and cutting-edge educational methodologies to align ABNS programs with the dynamic needs of neurosurgeons and the broader public they serve. In doing so, the COO will help shape the future of neurosurgical certification and education, ensuring ABNS remains a leader in the field.

The COO will also provide leadership and direction to ABNS staff, fostering a cohesive and high-performing team. This includes overseeing recruitment and hiring to attract additional top talent, implementing training programs to enhance staff capabilities, and developing retention strategies that prioritize engagement, satisfaction, and inclusivity. By cultivating a culture of collaboration and continuous

improvement, the COO will ensure that all departments work effectively together to achieve the organization's strategic goals.

Financial oversight is another key responsibility of the COO, encompassing budget development, resource allocation, and fiscal accountability. The COO will monitor financial performance, identify opportunities for cost optimization, and implement strategies to ensure long-term sustainability. By aligning financial management with ABNS's mission and priorities, the COO will strengthen the organization's operational foundation and support its ongoing growth.

The COO role requires a strategic mindset, exceptional management skills, and a collaborative approach across all organizational levels and the broader medical ecosystem. By driving innovation in board certification, assessment, and education while maintaining operational excellence, the COO will ensure that ABNS continues to excel in its mission to serve the public and advance the field of neurosurgery.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

The successful candidate will be an innovative and collaborative problem-solver with a distinctive record of achievement. A master's degree in business administration (MBA) or a related field, such as healthcare administration, and ten years of directly related operational experience or any equivalent combination of experience and/or education from which comparable knowledge, skills, and abilities have been achieved are required.

The successful candidate will also bring many of the following qualifications:

- Commitment to advancing the mission of ABNS through strategic initiatives and operational leadership.
- Proven experience in leading, supervising, and coordinating organizational functions, preferably in a medical association or healthcare-related organization.
- Ability to lead organizational change initiatives to achieve strategic and financial objectives, including selecting and mentoring staff.
- Demonstrated ability to develop, implement, interpret, and monitor policies, objectives, and operating procedures to achieve strategic goals.
- Experience in budgeting, financial reporting, and ensuring fiscal responsibility, including resource allocation and contract management.
- Experience leveraging technology and implementing innovative systems to enhance operational efficiency and support long-term growth.
- Strong expertise in overseeing HR functions, including employee recruitment, performance evaluation, and addressing disciplinary actions.
- Commitment to regulatory compliance and continuous improvement in organizational policies, resources, and office performance.
- Proven ability to work with boards, executive leadership, and external stakeholders to further organizational goals.
- Adept at building and maintaining relationships with medical boards, professional organizations, and vendors.
- Skilled at navigating complex, matrixed environments and fostering collaboration across multiple stakeholders.

- Strong communications skills.

COMPENSATION & LOCATION

It is expected that the Chief Operating Officer will be based in Washington, DC when the organization moves its headquarters there in early 2025. Salary will be commensurate with related experience and qualifications. Hybrid arrangements involving working both at the ABNS office and from home or remote locations may be considered for highly qualified candidates.

TO APPLY

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/american-board-neurological-surgery/chief-operating-officer>.

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Stephanie Fidel, Partner
Damla Williams, Senior Associate
Maria Peña, Search Coordinator

ABNS is an equal opportunity employer. ABNS hires the most qualified individuals for each position and does so without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, mental or physical disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, citizenship status, military service, or any other protected status.