

A Window Into OR Behavior

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When I clicked on the “View Your Exam Results” link on the American Board of Anesthesiology website, I thought something rashly exuberant would engulf me. I thought that everyone in the lunch room would turn suddenly, throw their reheated pasta and cafeteria sandwiches high aloft with glee and balloons would gush from the cracks between the fluorescent lights on the ceiling as the whole world burst into song.

But instead, there was only the word on the computer screen. At the right top corner of the webpage it read “Pass.”

I smiled broadly.

I floated back to the operating room and finished my case. As I saw my friends I told each one, receiving the heartiest hugs that I have ever been given in the hallways of the operating room. It was over.

Board certification in anesthesiology has four elements. You need to complete an accredited residency program. You need to be neither drug-addicted nor a criminal. You must pass a written examination. And finally, the year after you finish residency and take the written exam, you need to pass an oral board examination. This last step is the most daunting, and I will never have to do it again.

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