

"Victorious warriors win first; Then go to war.  
Defeated warriors go to war first; Then seek to win." (Sun Tsu)  
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Dear Friend:

Course dates:

NY-NJ "A": August 30-September 1 (Friday-Sunday early afternoon) – tentative

Dallas "B": October 4-6 (Friday-Sunday early afternoon)

(Note: Cards for NJ will NOT be charged until ten people have signed up, but I need cc card commitments, as this lets me know I have firm numbers.)

Several people have called asking about the Peds Blue Question-Answer testing course in Dallas a couple of weeks before the test and at the same time inquiring as to whether an earlier course could be contemplated to facilitate earlier training in advance of the exam. The purpose of this letter is to address these points and also to suggest a possible earlier course over Labor Day weekend in the New York-New Jersey area, providing enough interest exists.

As you know, for the first time, in 2013, the ABA will offer a special certification in pediatric anesthesia. As history has shown with the MOCA, those first in will likely face an exam less rigorous and with higher pass rates than those who follow. And what pediatric anesthesiologist in the USA would not immediately recognize such an examination as hugely validating and valuable to his or her net worth?

Many of you already have begun work upon Peds Blue, a modification of Big Blue which has been tweaked, key-word correlated, and refined to address as many key words relating to the pediatric examination which have been released by the ABA as possible. Focus is key to optimizing performance, and by summarizing and focusing upon the key words which govern the exam, we will surely put up our best score on exam day. In Peds Blue I've utilized the most important reference texts and have coupled this with persistence, dedication, and a practiced hand to summarize complex information which has been successful

for many taking anesthesiology Boards of all types over the past 20 plus years. Focus upon key words is key, so be repetitive with Peds Blue.

With respect to the course and given that the exam has never been given, I believe an important and potentially very successful line of attack would be to start with and in some cases build upon and modify relevant questions from the Written-MOCA courses as in many cases an exact and/or very similar key word correlates to these questions and the underlying concepts tested when the pediatric content domain is analyzed. In other words, there's not a better path of efficient study and review than to systematically attack released, relevant questions (modified and enhanced in many cases) pertaining to the primary Written and MOCA examination.

It could reasonably be argued that these questions will not be difficult enough, will be too easy, for advanced practitioners of pediatric anesthesia such as you. Two points. For many, it's been quite some time since the nuances of anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, congenital cardiac lesions, and the rest have been reviewed. Second, I think you would be surprised, as I am in my daily efforts to identify and prepare these selected questions from my overall, larger database of questions, as to just how challenging some of these questions (which can clearly be linked back to the content domain) actually are – especially when modified in important ways.

With respect to the format, the course will be a question and answer testing format of the same kind I've given and hopefully quite perfected over the past two decades teaching hundreds of courses with a similar format. Like many good things, it seems simple. You as an attendee will take a series of timed tests which will be self-graded and self-evaluated. In this way, we will simulate both the format of the actual exam and also test your knowledge of both Peds Blue and therefore the content domain governing the actual test. Following each test, which will usually run about 90-100 minutes (I've found less time is too short, more too long), I'll then systematically review each question, each answer, and the background information (often right out of Peds Blue) which a Board examiner is him or herself parsing and evaluating to write a similar question.

I need to move along, too, as the moderator, just as you do as an examinee. Sometimes this requires me to put myself on a verbal diet, but as the hunger pangs of noon approach and/or I sense droning at the end of the day, you'll find I can cover ground and complete task as I have at a few such sessions before. Sometimes escaping being tarred and feathered has presented a different and more difficult problem, but so far while fires have been set, chickens plucked, and tar heated cooler heads have prevailed and your moderator has escaped serious harm and humiliation, too.

In reality, if I do my job, as I've done in the past and hope to here, this sort of "forced march" we take together has a history of enabling us to cover huge ground in terms of information database, to do so in a fun and interesting way (to the extent this can be fun and interesting at all), while ultimately dramatically improving test scores.

Believe it or not, over the past two decades, I've tried every single possible teaching format, including lectures, study halls, exhortations, séances, rock 'n roll revivals, and even a couple of Holy roller meetings and nothing holds a candle to a well run, well administered, question and answer testing program of the kind I've now done several hundred times and propose here.

Simply put, at the end of the weekend, I believe you will find yourself saying, "As much as I would have liked to be at home, there is simply no way I could have achieved as much at home to advance the cause of passing a potentially difficult examination as I have achieved right here this weekend." This has certainly been my perception as a teacher and I believe the perception of the many I've taught with this very format and in these very ways over many years.

With respect to an earlier course, several have properly pointed out that last minute review, while highly useful in its own right, does not replace and cannot act as a substitute for earlier, intensive review. I agree. Therefore, while I believe in last minute review very strongly, I am certainly amenable to trying to put on a course in NY-NJ over the Labor Day weekend. To do this, I would have to know fairly soon, as it would entail not doing the Oral Boards course scheduled for that very weekend. As a point of courtesy to those starting to tentatively plan

upon attending that course, it would be important to know by July 15 at the latest which course is a go.

Accordingly, I'm going to ask my webmaster when I next see him to add this earlier course in both tentative and final forms. This will enable you to quickly let me know if you are interested, while you then determine if you can actually attend. We should know within a fairly short period if we have the 15-20 people necessary to put on the course.

If we go with the earlier course, it will be with equally good but substantially different content than the final PREP in Dallas as I can already see in preparing the course that I will have enough content to have two largely and substantially different courses. This will allow people who really like the format, learn and benefit a lot, and want both early work and late polish to be fully accommodated; NJ would then be considered the "A" course, and Dallas the "B" course. As usual, the same disclaimer will apply: "Neither course is better, they are just different sets of questions. Of course, the emphasis for each course will ultimately and by necessity not be identical, but both will be equally strong as the questions making them up will be randomly selected. People will be happy, satisfied, fulfilled, and prepared by both courses."

As with all of my Written-MOCA courses over these many years, you will leave with the summaries of what we discuss, the answers to the questions, but not the questions themselves. I cannot and will not violate the copyrights of the ABA. I am doing the very best I can to simulate what I believe will ultimately be tested, and I'm going as far as I possibly can in that direction, please know. But there are limits, these are the limits, and limits must be clear and respected by all, or please don't come to the course. Overall, through the years, I marvel at the integrity and honor of those whom I've served. I can count on just one hand the number of dishonest acts, and this is quite remarkable given the level of intensity and the pressures we face in this process of Board certification. Having a chance to work with such fine people is one reason I still enjoy doing so.

Obviously, if you sign up and courses don't have the 15-20 people required, you will get a full refund. Sign up soon, if you intend to do so, as then I get serious about looking for and signing a contract with a hotel for suitable meeting space.

Just a couple of more disclosures. First, we will use a mix of K type format questions, as well as single best and R type. It's likely, although unannounced as far as I know, that the exam itself will be entirely single best, but I would rather develop new content by analyzing new key words than mess around altering a question which is asked in an arguably more difficult format to make it too easy and just to say, "The course will have no K types." Matter of fact, too, please know this allows me to get some helpful distance from the ABA in my claim that we are not trying to steal exams but are rather using a testing format to review the content domain governing the exam. Second, you can overtly copy a few questions each day, as this would be understandable to any reasonable person, but the course cannot be seen or alleged to be a copying session that, in effect, violates copyrights I don't own. This cannot be, because of the concern expressed, namely the protection of ABA copyrights.

Together, teamed up against the ABA, and facing their challenging examination, we cannot and will not fail. Success is our destiny as we take on and beat another Beast of Boards-the pediatric anesthesiology Board examination.

Thanks again for all of your great friendship and support over the years. It has sustained me through some tough times as I've done personal and professional battle against the Beast. Again, thank you. As has been said, "The highest honor I've achieved in my life is having my name linked to yours in these great events."

Let me know as soon as you reasonably can about these courses by signing up on the site. I've only had to cancel one course over the years, and the sad thing is if those who ultimately came forth in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to sign up had signed up earlier, we would have easily met the minimum needed to have a viable meeting. But, please know, when signing hotel contracts one immediately faces stiff cancellation charges and therefore one must be very cautious in committing to meeting space without firm numbers.

So I hope to see you at the course, and I know it will help you greatly. In this spirit of friendship and professional advancement, Onward to Victory!

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