

FITTER CANDIDATE GUIDE



Eligibility Requirements
Application Process
Exam Content

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Who We Are

Established in 1948 as a not-for profit organization, the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics and Pedorthics, Inc., commonly known as ABC, is a national certifying and accrediting body for the orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professions. ABC has become the quality standard in orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic certification.

ABC certified individuals are considered leaders in the profession and provide the highest quality patient care, along with excellence in research and device design. ABC certified individuals must meet stringent educational standards, clinical training and a complete assessment of competency.

ABC conducts examinations to test the competency of those persons engaged in the practice of orthotic, mastectomy and therapeutic shoe fittings who voluntarily apply for the examination process.

MISSION AND VISION

ABC is the comprehensive credentialing organization whose mission is to establish and advocate for the highest patient care and organizational standards in the provision of safe and effective orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic services.

ABC fulfills this mission by:

- Measuring patient care provider's knowledge and skills through rigorous credentialing programs
- Establishing standards of organizational performance through facility accreditation
- Mandating professional continuing education to maintain competency
- Administering a professional discipline program
- Communicating the value and importance of ABC credentials

ABC's activities are guided by the following vision statement:

Setting Standards, Improving Outcomes, Changing Lives

RECOGNITION

ABC certification is recognized by federal and state agencies, as well as third-party payers and is considered the standard among orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic professionals. ABC certified practitioners are valuable members of the rehabilitation provider community.

GOVERNANCE OF ABC

The affairs of ABC are governed by the board of directors. Therefore, the board is responsible for the policies and procedures governing certification, and the board has the authority under its bylaws to modify the rules, regulations and policies, as it deems appropriate. The board is comprised of ABC credential holders and public representatives.



Certified Fitters

ABC certification of orthotic, mastectomy and therapeutic shoe fitters is awarded as attestations of competency for the public, those who require orthotic, mastectomy or therapeutic shoe fitting services and those in other health professions.

The awarding of ABC certification provides the certified fitter with an appropriate and meaningful recognition of professional competence.

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

Completion of our eligibility requirements and examinations is confirmation that you have the education, knowledge, experience and skills required of an ABC Certified Fitter. ABC awards the following fitter credentials: Certified Fitter-orthotics (CFo), Certified Fitter-mastectomy (CFm) and Certified Fitter- therapeutic shoes (CFts).

PROPRIETARY OWNERSHIP OF ABC CREDENTIALS

Certification is a privilege, not a right. The ABC Board of Directors maintains legal authority to award its certification credentials and may withhold, suspend or revoke any certification credential in accordance with the established policies, rules and regulations.

Scope of Practice

CERTIFIED FITTER-ORTHOTICS

According to the [Orthotic, Prosthetic, and Pedorthic Scope of Practice](#), an ABC certified fitter-orthotics is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained in the provision of certain orthoses. This includes patient assessment, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, follow-up and practice management. An ABC certified fitter-orthotics is competent to practice orthotics within a scope of practice that is specific to fitting certain prefabricated orthoses as described below:

- Cervical orthoses, except those used to treat an unstable cervical condition
- Prefabricated orthoses for the upper and lower extremities, except for the following:
 - those used in the initial and/or acute treatment of long bone fractures and dislocations
 - therapeutic (diabetic) shoes/inserts and functional electrical stimulation orthoses (e.g. myo-orthosis, neuroprosthesis)
- Prefabricated spinal orthoses, except those used in the treatment of scoliosis or unstable spinal conditions, or halo cervical orthoses
- Pressure gradient garments
- Trusses

CERTIFIED FITTER-MASTECTOMY

According to the [Mastectomy Fitter Scope of Practice](#), an ABC certified fitter-mastectomy is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained in the provision of breast prostheses and post-mastectomy items and services. This includes patient assessment, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, follow-up and practice management.

CERTIFIED FITTER-THERAPEUTIC SHOES

According to the [Orthotic, Prosthetic, and Pedorthic Scope of Practice](#), an ABC certified fitter-therapeutic shoes is a health care professional who is specifically educated and trained to provide non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom multi-density inserts. This includes patient assessment, formulation of a treatment plan, implementation of the treatment plan, follow-up and practice management.

Code of Professional Responsibility

ABC established the Professional Ethics Program to promote and maintain the highest standards of patient care and ethical behavior.

The [ABC Code of Professional Responsibility](#) is recognized throughout the profession as embodying the principles which govern the professional, ethical and moral integrity of individuals and organizations engaged in the delivery of orthotic, prosthetic and pedorthic care.

The fundamental objectives of the Professional Ethics Committee are to enforce the Code. The committee ensures that any person, facility or organization who may apply, has applied, or has been awarded any of the certifications or accreditations offered by ABC are practicing in accordance with professional and community standards. The Code and the committee serve to protect the public against unprofessional and unethical conduct by credential holders.

All ABC exam applicants and candidates must abide by the Code.

Certification Eligibility Requirements

ORTHOTIC FITTER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

You must have a high school diploma, GED certificate or college degree and complete an [ABC approved orthotic fitter pre-certification education course](#).

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

There are two experience pathways for eligibility.

- **Pathway 1**—You must have 1,000 hours of orthotic fitting experience
- **Pathway 2**—You must have 500 hours of orthotic fitting experience. You may apply under this pathway if you currently hold a nationally recognized license/certification in a related allied health profession (e.g., Medical Assistant, Athletic Trainer, Physical Therapist/PTA, Occupational Therapist/ OTA).

Your experience must be in the fitting of certain orthotic devices as outlined in the [Scope of Practice](#) of an ABC Certified Fitter-orthotics.

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The patient care experience requirement serves as the clinical training portion of the orthotic fitter education. It is optimal if your experience is fulfilled after completion of an ABC-approved orthotic fitter education course; however, you can use patient care experience gained prior to the completion of your education course.

The intent of the patient care experience is to provide you with practical application of the knowledge, skills and competencies gained during your educational program. This is most optimally achieved if the experience takes place within an organization that primarily provides orthotic patient care services. If your experience takes place in a setting that is not primarily engaged in orthotic patient care services, your experience will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether it meets the intent of the requirement.

We encourage you to use the [Orthotic Fitter Exam Candidate Self-Assessment Checklist](#) as a tool to guide you through your work experience and to make sure that you are getting the type and amount of experience in each area that the profession expects.

MASTECTOMY FITTER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

You must have a high school diploma, GED certificate or college degree and complete an [ABC approved mastectomy fitter pre-certification education course](#).

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

There are two experience pathways for eligibility.

- **Pathway 1**—You must have 120 hours of mastectomy fitting experience
- **Pathway 2**—You must have 60 hours of mastectomy fitting experience. You may apply under this pathway if you currently hold a nationally recognized license/certification in a related allied health profession (e.g., RN, LPN, Medical Assistant, Certified Breast Care Nurse (BCN), Oncology Certified Nurse (OCN), Certified Breast Patient Navigator)

Your experience must be in providing direct patient care specific to fitting breast prostheses and providing other post-mastectomy items and services with these duties as a central responsibility.

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The patient care experience requirement serves as the clinical training portion of the mastectomy fitter education. It is optimal if your experience is fulfilled after completion of an ABC-approved mastectomy fitter education course; however, you can use patient care experience gained prior to the completion of your education course.

The intent of the patient care experience is to provide you with practical application of the knowledge, skills and competencies gained during your education course. This is most optimally achieved if your experience takes place within an organization that primarily provides post-mastectomy patient care services.

If your experience takes place in a setting that is not primarily engaged in post-mastectomy patient care services, your experience will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether it meets the intent of the requirement.

We encourage you to use the [Mastectomy Fitter Exam Candidate Self-Assessment Checklist](#) as a tool to guide you through your work experience and to make sure that you are getting the type and amount of experience in each area that the profession expects.

THERAPEUTIC SHOE FITTER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

You must have a high school diploma, GED certificate or college degree and complete [an ABC approved therapeutic shoe fitter pre-certification education course](#).

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

You must have 125 hours of therapeutic shoe fitting experience. This experience must be in providing direct patient care specific to non-custom therapeutic shoes and non-custom diabetic multi-density inserts.

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The patient care experience requirement serves as the clinical training portion of the therapeutic shoe fitter education. It is optimal if your experience is fulfilled after completion of an ABC-approved therapeutic shoe fitter education course; however, you can use patient care experience gained prior to the completion of your education course.

The intent of the patient care experience is to provide you with practical application of the knowledge, skills and competencies gained during your education course. This is most optimally achieved if your experience takes place within an organization that primarily provides therapeutic shoe patient care services. If your experience takes place in a setting that is not primarily engaged in therapeutic shoe patient care services, your experience will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine whether it meets the intent of the requirement.

We encourage you to use the [Therapeutic Shoe Fitter Exam Candidate Self-Assessment Checklist](#) as a tool to guide you through your work experience and to make sure that you are getting the type and amount of experience in each area that the profession expects.

FOREIGN EDUCATION

If you have received your education outside the U.S., you must have your education evaluated by the [World Education Services \(WES\)](#). WES is a professional education evaluation service that confirms foreign education programs' equivalence to a high school diploma.

Application Process and Policies

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

All requirements must be met by the application deadline for your desired exam session. Applications must be submitted at [ABCop.org](#).

You must attempt the exam within one calendar year from the date your application is approved. Failure to attempt the exam within that period will cause the application to expire and a new application must be submitted.

FEES

Payment is required when you apply. ABC accepts electronic payments in the form of a debit or credit card or Automated Clearing House (ACH). The fees are:

- The non-refundable application fee
- The examination fee

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD

You will be assigned an *Exam Candidate* status when your application has been reviewed and approved. You will then be granted a three-year eligibility period in which to take and pass the examination. ABC grants you four attempts to pass the exam within your eligibility period.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

It is ABC's policy to administer certification examinations in a manner that does not discriminate against an otherwise qualified applicant. ABC offers reasonable and appropriate accommodations for the exams for those persons with documented disabilities, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If you require any accommodations, you must submit your requests by the application deadline of your desired exam session to provide adequate time to resolve any documentation or exam logistical issues that may arise. ABC will review each request on an individual basis and make decisions relative to appropriate accommodations based on specific guidelines.

The [Testing Accommodations Policy](#) and the [Testing Accommodations Application](#) should be referenced for additional specific information.

CRIMINAL HISTORY DISCLOSURE

Health care providers are placed in a position of trust with their patients. Often these providers have unsupervised, physical contact with their patients. You must disclose criminal history information if you have been convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction, pleaded nolo contendere to a felony or any crime involving moral turpitude, or is currently under indictment for such a crime.

You must submit a signed written statement and full explanation along with supporting documents to accompany the application. Examples of supporting documents may include, but are not limited to, official court documents, probation documents, police reports, etc.

AUTHORITY

ABC reserves the right to ask you to furnish such information or make such inquiries as may be deemed appropriate to identify the nature and extent of your education, experience, competency and moral character.

NOTIFICATION OF APPLICATION DECISION

You will be notified by email of your application approval or denial within the four weeks following the application deadline. You can check your [My ABC](#) account to view the status of your application.

ADDRESS CHANGES

The email address provided on the application will be used for emailing your letter of eligibility, registration information, exam confirmation and results. You are responsible for updating your information immediately on your [My ABC](#) account.

FALSIFICATION

Discovery that you have falsified *any* information on your application, any or all of the following actions may be taken:

- Rejection of your application
- Barring you from the exam(s)
- Revocation of any existing ABC certification or status
- Reference of the incident to the Professional Ethics Committee
- Any act of falsification shall be made a part of your permanent record.

APPLICANT INELIGIBILITY

You may be determined ineligible for any of following reasons:

- Insufficient documentation to assess eligibility
- Documentation provided does not meet eligibility requirements
- Lack of required fees
- Failure to meet posted deadlines for documentation

If it is determined that the information provided is inadequate to assess eligibility, you will be notified and given a deadline to respond with necessary documentation. If documents are not received by the given deadline, your application will be deferred, one time, to the next exam cycle. Failure to complete your application after one deferral will terminate your application, and a new application and new application fee will be required.

APPLICATION APPEALS

If you have been denied on the basis that you have failed to demonstrate the minimal eligibility requirements, you may appeal the denial. You must submit your appeal in writing to the ABC Board of Directors.

Appeals must:

- Be in writing, signed by the applicant and sent to ABC by fax or email
- State the specific reasons for appeal
- Be accompanied by evidence or other pertinent information refuting original findings
- Be sent no later than 30 calendar days after the date on the notification letter

APPEALS DECISION

You will receive notification of the decision within 60 days of receipt of the request. The Board of Directors' decision is final.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

ABC does not discriminate on any basis that would constitute illegal discrimination under federal law.

RE-EXAMINATION

If you fail the exam, you must re-register at ABCOP.org by the application deadline for the desired exam session. You must be within your current eligibility period and have not exhausted your allotted four attempts at the exam.

REAPPLYING FOR ELIGIBILITY

If you have exhausted your eligibility period, you may reapply for eligibility by submitting a new application, subject to the prevailing *Candidate Guide*, and a new application fee.

Documentation

EDUCATION

You will be required to submit a copy of:

- your high school diploma, GED certificate, or official transcripts
- your certificate of completion from the ABC approved fitter pre-certification education course

These documents must be uploaded to the online application dashboard or can be faxed or emailed directly to ABC.

COMPETENCY ATTESTATION FORM

You will be required to submit the discipline-specific *Fitter Competency Attestation* form, which verifies that you have obtained the necessary knowledge and skills needed to perform the functions of a fitter.

The clinical experience required to become eligible to become ABC certified as a fitter is documented on the attestation form. If you do not possess a particular knowledge or skill, your attester/supervisor should work with you prior to completing the attestation form.

ATTESTER/SUPERVISOR REQUIREMENTS

ORTHOTIC FITTER

The [Orthotic Fitter Competency Attestation](#) form must be completed and signed by one of the following: a certified practitioner, a certified and/or licensed orthotic fitter or a professional referral source. A professional referral source is defined as an appropriately licensed healthcare provider who is a referral source and is familiar with your professional knowledge and skills.

MASTECTOMY FITTER

The [Mastectomy Fitter Competency Attestation](#) form must be completed and signed by one of the following: a certified practitioner, a certified and/or licensed mastectomy fitter or a professional referral source. A professional referral source is defined as an appropriately licensed healthcare provider who is a referral source and is familiar with your professional knowledge and skills.

THERAPEUTIC SHOE FITTER

The [Therapeutic Shoe Fitter Competency Attestation](#) form must be completed and signed by one of the following: certified and/or licensed orthotist, pedorthist, therapeutic shoe fitter, or a professional referral source. A professional referral source is defined as an appropriately licensed healthcare prescriber who is a referral source and is familiar with your professional knowledge and skills.

Exam Policies and Information

CONFIRMATION OF EXAM DATES/ LOCATIONS

You will receive an Authorization-to-Test (ATT) letter by email from ABC, which information about scheduling your exam. You will have the option to take the exam at a testing center location or online with a live remote proctor.

EXAM ADMITTANCE

You must arrive at the assigned location at least 30 minutes prior to your scheduled exam time and have your identity confirmed by a valid photo ID. If you are late, you will not be able to test. **No exceptions will be made.**

You will be required to show one current form of identification, which must be an unexpired government-issued photo identification document with signature (e.g., driver's license or passport). The name on the identification document must match the name on the ATT letter. You will not be permitted to test without the required identification. **No exceptions will be made.**

CANCELLATION/REFUND POLICIES

ABC understands that circumstances may occur that may cause you to have to cancel your upcoming exam. If you are unable to take an upcoming exam that you registered for, you must notify ABC. Cancellations are effective the date it is received.

Cancellations received 31 days or more preceding your scheduled examination date will be eligible for a refund or deferral of your exam fee(s).

There will be a cancellation fee if we are notified less than 30 days prior to your scheduled exam.

Cancellations made within five (5) days of the scheduled exam date will result in forfeiture of your exam fee.

Cancellations should be carefully considered. Please reference your ATT letter for a full explanation of our testing service's cancellation and/or rescheduling policy.

Please note: If you fail to schedule an appointment with our testing service for your registered exam session, you will forfeit the exam fee(s). Your eligibility period will not be extended.

TEST CENTER CLOSINGS

If a testing center must close, affecting your scheduled test date, every effort will be made to provide you with options that may include:

- having your exam rescheduled to an alternate date
- a full refund of your exam fees
- deferment of your exam to the next exam session

HAZARDOUS WEATHER

If you are unable to travel to your testing center due to hazardous weather, you must notify ABC immediately at certification@abcop.org to be eligible for a refund or rescheduling options.

MISCONDUCT AT THE EXAM

The following activities are prohibited:

- Failing to observe any rules of conduct as outlined by the test proctor
- Copy in writing or otherwise record or transmit to others any exam questions or answers or other aspects of the nature or content of the exam
- Bring any answering agent of any nature (i.e., books, notes, electronic devices) to the exam site
- Remove from the test site any scratch paper used during the exam
- Offer, assist or solicit assistance from other candidates, examiners or those responsible for the administration of the exam
- Engage in any other conduct or inappropriate behavior that is injurious to the integrity of the exam or to any of its participants

DISMISSAL POLICIES

If you are observed engaging in any of the above activities, you will be dismissed from the exam and forfeit your exam fee. You may also be barred from future exams, and your period of eligibility may be affected.

Misconduct at the examinations will be referred to ABC's Professional Ethics Committee for review and determination of a possible ethical violation.

LANGUAGE

The exam is offered in English only. No translators or translation devices will be allowed during the examination

CANDIDATE INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALITY

ABC is committed to protecting the confidentiality of your records and has policies to ensure your privacy. Information about your exam results is not released to any third party, other than state licensure boards, if required, or by your request.

DATA COMPILATION

ABC may develop and publish statistical data regarding the exams; however, your identity will not be divulged.

Exam Scoring and Reporting

EXAM RESULTS

A pass/fail exam result will be displayed immediately upon completion of your exam. In addition, within 24 hours, ABC will notify you that your scores are available on your My ABC account.

EXAM REVIEW POLICY

If a candidate in their initial eligibility period fails an exam three times, they may request a review of their most recent exam attempt. This review will provide additional information concerning the content areas in which the candidate is not performing well. In order to qualify for this exam review, the following criteria must be met:

- The candidate must submit a written request to certification@abcop.org.
- The candidate's third exam attempt score was within 5 percent of the passing score.
- The candidate is still within their eligibility period and has registered for their fourth exam attempt.

Please be advised that processing exam reviews can take up to four weeks.

RELEASE OF EXAM INFORMATION

The nature, format, content and results of examinations administered by ABC are considered privileged information. Due to the importance of test security and item banking, neither test questions nor answer keys will be disclosed or made available for review by candidates or any other unauthorized third party.

SCORING PROCEDURES

All scoring procedures and responses to exam questions are conducted and verified by ABC's testing service.

The passing score for the exam has been recommended by a geographically diverse panel of practicing certified fitters with both clinical and educational backgrounds individually selected by the ABC board of directors. This panel, under the guidance of testing experts from ABC's testing service, computes a passing score representing the minimum level of knowledge that must be demonstrated to pass the exam. All exams are administered and scored by a computer-based system.

EXAM INCIDENT REVIEW & APPEALS

You may not appeal a failing score on any exam. However, you may request a review a particular incident or administrative procedure in relation to an exam.

You may request a review of a specific incident or procedure relative to the exam process or administration procedure if you believe the incident or procedure impeded your opportunity for successful completion of your exam.

The following actions must be taken prior to submitting a written request for review:

- File a *Center Procedure Report* with the Test Center Administrator before leaving the testing center
- Contact ABC's testing service by email or phone within 24 hours after the incident occurred and provide the case summary or ticket number, if applicable.

The written request for review must be:

- Submitted to ABC within five days of the exam date
- Accompanied by a description of the incident or administrative procedure including any relevant evidence or other pertinent information
- Accompanied by the case summary or ticket number, if applicable

INCIDENT REVIEW RESOLUTION

If a request for review is submitted concerning an incident or administrative procedure, you will receive notification of the outcome within 30 days of receipt of the request. Should you not be satisfied with the decision rendered, you may submit a written appeal to the board of directors within 14 days. You will be notified of the board's decision within 60 days of receipt of the request. The board of directors' decision is final.

The Exams

Each exam is designed to evaluate knowledge and clinical competencies in the provision of orthotic, post-mastectomy or therapeutic shoe services. The exams and the passing scores are reviewed and revised biennially.

EXAM DESCRIPTIONS

ORTHOTIC FITTER

A two-and-a-half-hour, multiple-choice exam consisting of 125 items designed to measure your knowledge of orthotic fitting. Knowledge assessed on the exam includes basic anatomy, prefabricated orthotic devices, fitting criteria of such devices, ethics and professionalism.

MASTECTOMY FITTER

A two-and-a-half-hour, multiple-choice exam consisting of 125 items designed to measure your knowledge of mastectomy fitting. Knowledge assessed on the exam includes patient assessment, formulation and implementation of a treatment plan, follow-up care, practice management, ethics and professionalism.

THERAPEUTIC SHOE FITTER

A two-hour, multiple-choice exam consisting of 100 items designed to measure your knowledge of therapeutic shoe fitting. Knowledge assessed on the exam includes patient assessment, shoe fitting techniques, follow-up care, ethics and professionalism.

EXAM FORMAT

The exam is administered by computer-based testing (CBT). CBT is a method of administering tests in which the responses are electronically recorded.

EXAM AVAILABILITY

The exam is offered bi-monthly at more than 350 locations around the country. Exam sessions, deadlines and locations are available at ABCop.org.

EXAM CONTENT

The development of valid examinations begins with a practice analysis that gives a clear and concise definition of the knowledge, skills and abilities needed for safe and effective clinical practice. Subject matter experts have identified the critical aspects of the professions of orthotic, post-mastectomy and therapeutic shoe care using a process that includes interviews, surveys, observation and group discussions.

ABC conducts practice analysis studies that identify performance domains for each fitter discipline. Within each performance domain, several identified tasks provide the basis for questions in the examinations. Practice analyses also identify associated knowledge and skills.

DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC PRACTICE ANALYSES:

- [ABC Certified Orthotic Fitter](#)
- [ABC Certified Mastectomy Fitters](#)
- [ABC Certified Therapeutic Shoe Fitters](#)

EXAM DEVELOPMENT

ABC updates the examinations on a regular basis with questions written by fitters from the profession. Item development activities are conducted as needed to ensure that an adequate supply of new questions are available for the ABC exams.

EXAM PREPARATION

ABC has exam preparation resources available at ABCop.org. as you prepare to site for your ABC [orthotic](#), [mastectomy](#) or [therapeutic shoe fitter](#) certification exam. These include the *Practice Analysis*, *Test Content Outlines* and sample exam questions. ABC encourages you to review these documents in preparation for your exams.

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Initial Certification

After successfully completing the certification exam, in approximately four weeks, you will receive a congratulatory letter, a certificate, a certification number, a lapel pin, an email to claim your digital badge, the ABC [Guide to Maintaining Your Certification](#) and information regarding the proper use of the ABC credential and logo. You will also receive a pro-rated invoice for the current year's certification fees.

Certified fitters in good standing will receive the *O&P Almanac*, *Mark of Merit* newsletter, and be listed in the [ABC online directory](#).

Maintaining Certification

You are required to maintain certification by paying annual renewal fees, participating in ABC's continuing education program and adhere to the [ABC Code of Professional Responsibility](#). Your certification will be renewed at the end of a five-year cycle if the minimum number of required continuing education credits have been earned; the requirements are outlined in the [Guide to Maintaining Your Certification](#).

Setting Standards, Improving Outcomes, Changing Lives.