



# The Diplomat

American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

SPRING 2026



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# A Message from the OCE Chair



Achieving the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (ABOMS) Diplomate credential represents a defining capstone in a surgeon's years of disciplined training and professional growth. This February, 321 Candidates challenged themselves with the 2026 Oral Certifying Examination (OCE). While the examination itself spans just 144 minutes in length, both Candidates and Exam Committee members devote substantial time, expertise, and preparation throughout the year leading up to the OCE.

It is this sustained dedication of the entire Exam Committee that ensures the examination remains rigorous, fair, and reflective of the broad scope of our specialty. During the OCE week, that preparation comes to life as Candidates engage with each case to demonstrate focus, composure, and subject matter mastery.

The OCE stands as one of the most meaningful professional experiences at the outset of a surgeon's career, yet its significance extends well beyond the Candidates themselves. Serving as an Examiner is also an exceptional professional development experience—one that we anticipate each year with great pride. In some cases, today's Candidates become tomorrow's Examiners, continuing a tradition of excellence that strengthens our specialty across generations.

Beyond the oral and maxillofacial surgery community, Board Certification signals the attainment of a nationally recognized standard of professional practice. Achieving Diplomate status provides patients, the public, licensing boards, hospitals, insurers, and professional colleagues with confidence in a surgeon's demonstrated competence, judgment, and commitment to the highest standards of care.

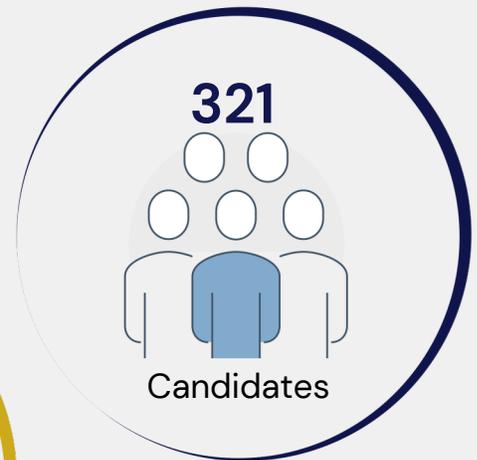
On behalf of the ABOMS Board of Directors, I applaud the 2026 Candidates for taking on this important step in their professional careers and express my profound gratitude to the Examiners and volunteers whose expertise and dedication make the OCE possible.

Sincerely,

**Paul S. Tiwana, DDS, MD, FACS**  
*Vice President & 2026 OCE Chair*



# Community Overview



# Diplomate Reminders

## Annual Requirements

### Annual Registration Due March 31, 2026

All Diplomates are required to register each year in order to maintain their Board Certification. If you haven't already, please login to your account and register by March 31 to avoid late fees.

All Diplomates are eligible for selection in the audit process for ABOMS Certification Maintenance. If selected, the Diplomate must submit documentation demonstrating compliance with all requirements to maintain Diplomate status.

### Certification Maintenance Due December 31, 2026

Don't wait until the end of the year! Get started on your 2026 Certification Maintenance requirements. These online modules help keep your knowledge current and are required to maintain your certification status.

## Job Task Analysis (JTA) Survey

ABOMS is conducting a JTA study to validate and refine the content of our examinations. As an ABOMS Diplomate, your perspective is vital!

If you haven't already, please take 20-30 minutes to complete the survey. If you have already started, you can continue your progress on the same device.

# Diplomates Making a Difference

## Dr. N Ray Lee

### *From the Air Force to the Operating Room*

Dr. Lee's career began in the United State Airforce as a combat medic and chairside dental assistant. These early experiences sparked a deep interest in dentistry and set him on the path toward becoming a dentist. While in college, Dr. Lee worked as a chairside surgical assistant for an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Assisting with his first LeFort I osteotomy confirmed his calling—he knew he wanted to become an oral and maxillofacial surgeon.



After graduating from the College of William & Mary in Virginia and Baylor College of Dentistry, Dr. Lee completed his internship and residency in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). From the beginning of his career, he recognized the profound impact the specialty could have on patients' lives. Procedures such as orthognathic surgery to correct craniofacial deformities, treatment for obstructive sleep apnea, and dental implant placement to restore function can dramatically improve a patient's quality of life—an impact that continues to inspire his work today.

Committed to giving back to the specialty, Dr. Lee also dedicated much of his career to teaching. He served on the clinical faculty at VCU and later became Director of Oral Medicine and faculty at Eastern Virginia Medical School, where he taught otolaryngology residents to manage maxillofacial trauma. Teaching oral and maxillofacial surgery for more than three decades has been deeply rewarding, alongside practicing the full scope of the specialty in his outpatient ambulatory surgical private practice.



As a veteran, he has also remained committed to serving fellow veterans. After meeting Wayne Kyle, president of the American Valor Foundation and father of Chris Kyle, he was inspired to create Operation Restore Oral Health. The foundation connects honorably discharged veterans with volunteer oral and maxillofacial surgeons, dentists, and dental laboratories who provide implant restorations at no cost.

Many of these veterans struggle with PTSD, and restoring their smile and oral function can be life-changing. For some, the transformation has renewed confidence, hope, and a sense of purpose. For him, this work reflects the true power of oral and maxillofacial surgery: the ability to change lives.

If you know of an outstanding Diplomat we should feature next, please email [marketing@aboms.org](mailto:marketing@aboms.org) to nominate them.

# Diplomates Making a Difference

## Dr. Joli Chou

### *Surgical Skill in Service of Those Who Need It Most*

Dr. Chou is an academic oral and maxillofacial surgeon at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA. She was initially drawn to the specialty due to the unique intersection of medicine, surgery, and dentistry. OMS offers Dr. Chou the opportunity to manage complex pathology, restore function, and improve quality of life for patients afflicted with maxillofacial conditions—often in a single operation.



She was particularly inspired by the specialty's breadth: from reconstruction of congenital differences such as cleft lip and palate to dentoalveolar surgery to trauma, orthognathic reconstruction, pathology, and management of airway disorders.



Over the past 15 years, Dr. Chou has volunteered her time and expertise aboard Mercy Ships hospital vessels to bring surgical care to patients in Mexico, Guinea, Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Benin, Cameroon, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Armenia, and beyond.

Dr. Chou's experience with Mercy Ships profoundly deepened her commitment to OMS. Serving aboard the hospital ship enabled her to help patients with advanced facial tumors and congenital deformities who had little to no access to surgical care.

She says, "The pathology was both humbling and technically challenging, but what stood out most was the resilience and gratitude of the patients. Working within a multidisciplinary, resource-conscious environment reinforced my belief that surgical skill carries a responsibility to serve beyond traditional boundaries."

Dr. Chou is an inspiration to us all! If you know of an outstanding Diplomate we should feature next, please email [marketing@aboms.org](mailto:marketing@aboms.org) to nominate them.



# Upcoming Events & Deadlines

## **ABOMS Annual Registration Deadline**

March 31, 2026

## **ABOMS Exam Committee Applications**

August 11- September 30, 2026

## **AAOMS Annual Meeting**

September 28 - October 3, 2026 in Seattle, WA

## **ABOMS Certification Maintenance Deadline**

December 31, 2026