

AAES Council Statement on the Focused Practice Designation in Adult Complex Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery

Approved by the Council of the American Association of Endocrine Surgeons (AAES) – December 2, 2025

The American Association of Endocrine Surgeons (AAES) supports and recognizes the newly established Focused Practice Designation (FPD) in Adult Complex Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery (ACTPS), developed jointly by the American Board of Surgery (ABS) and the American Board of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery (ABOHNS). The ABS and ABOHNS developed this designation to acknowledge the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of modern thyroid and parathyroid surgery and to recognize surgeons who dedicate a significant portion of their practice to the care of patients with benign or malignant, functional or non-functional tumors of the thyroid and parathyroid glands, including complex cases such as re-operative surgery, locally advanced disease, aggressive histologic subtypes, or inherited endocrine syndromes. **This designation provides a voluntary means of formally documenting focused involvement in this area of practice and complements the many established ways AAES members already demonstrate their experience and expertise, offering an optional pathway to reflect commitment to thyroid and parathyroid surgery beyond fellowship training and/or dedicated practice experience.**

The AAES was instrumental in the proposal of this designation in 2023, and many members contributed directly to its development as well as to the creation and vetting of the examination content. Over one hundred AAES members participated in the inaugural administration of the ACTPS exam, reflecting the deep engagement of our Society in shaping the standards of practice for complex thyroid and parathyroid surgery. The AAES recognizes that participation in this designation involves additional time and cost.

The AAES affirms that this new designation:

- Does not replace or supersede ABS/ABOHNS certification or AAES fellowship training.
- Does not certify surgical skill or quality outcomes, but recognizes surgeons who have demonstrated focused practice, multidisciplinary engagement, and commitment to ongoing education in thyroid and parathyroid surgery.
- Supports patient awareness by identifying surgeons who voluntarily choose to demonstrate dedicated focus in complex thyroid and parathyroid surgery by completing the ACTPS exam.
- Represents an optional professional distinction, not a requirement for AAES membership or recognition.

The AAES strongly encourages all graduates of AAES-accredited endocrine surgery fellowships to pursue the Adult Complex Thyroid and Parathyroid Surgery Focused Practice Designation when they become eligible following fellowship completion. Doing so reinforces the breadth and quality of their training, highlights their commitment to excellence, and ensures AAES remains at the forefront of defining standards for complex thyroid and parathyroid surgery.

The AAES also encourages all qualified members—including those in academic and community practice who devote a significant portion of their clinical work to thyroid and parathyroid surgery—to consider obtaining this designation. Pursuing the FPD demonstrates professional dedication to complex thyroid and parathyroid disease management and supports our shared goal of advancing patient-centered, high-quality surgical care. To assist our members, the AAES is hosting informational sessions about eligibility, application logistics, and preparation for the exam. These sessions are intended to provide clarity, promote engagement, and help members navigate the process with confidence.

AAES members have long set the standard for excellence in endocrine surgery. Our AAES-accredited fellowships, Endocrine Surgery University curriculum, and CESQIP quality registry already emphasize advanced training and best practices in thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal, and pancreatic surgery. The AAES will continue to collaborate actively with the ABS and ABOHNS to ensure that the Focused Practice Designation accurately reflects the evolving standards and complexity of thyroid and parathyroid surgery.