

The specialty of plastic surgery includes reconstructive surgery and cosmetic surgery. Any licensed physician can practice and advertise any procedure they wish, including plastic surgery. However, they may not be approved at the hospital or surgery center to perform the procedure you are considering. Instead, they may only perform the procedure in their own in-office surgery suite. In professing to be a plastic surgeon, they may honestly be “board certified”, but not by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS), recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties. An ABPS certified surgeon has completed at least five years of additional residency after medical school- usually three years in general surgery (or its equivalent) and two years in plastic surgery. Additionally, they must meet requirements of practicing plastic surgery for two years and passing comprehensive written and oral exams before being granted certification by the ABPS. Those surgeons can be granted active membership in the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

There are also excellent plastic surgeons, trained in other countries and certified by the Boards of Plastic Surgery specific to those nations. These surgeons are granted Associate memberships in the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. Some other specialty board certifications; Otolaryngology and Ophthalmology for example, do include cosmetic procedures specific to those anatomical areas of training.

You can contact The American Society of Plastic Surgeons at 1-847-228-9900 or www.plasticsurgery.org.

The website for the American Board of Medical Specialties is www.ABMS.org.