

MEDICAL BOARD 2168 APPLICANT REPORT – KWON, CHOON HYUCK

DATE REPORT ISSUED: January 7, 2026

ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California

SUBJECT: Special Faculty Permit Application
Choon Hyuck Kwon, M.D.

STAFF CONTACT: Neal Funston, Analyst, Licensing Program

REQUESTED ACTION:

Review the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee’s (Committee) recommendation for a Special Faculty Permit (SFP) appointment for Choon Hyuck Kwon, M.D., pursuant to California Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).

BACKGROUND

The Medical Board of California (Board) is authorized to issue an SFP to a physician who is academically eminent and meets all the requirements pursuant to BPC section 2168.1.

The SFP authorizes an individual to practice medicine only within the medical school and its affiliated institutions where the SFP holder is providing instruction as part of the medical school’s educational program, and for which the medical school has assumed direct responsibility.

The Committee is comprised of 14 members: one representative from each of the 11 medical schools in California, one representative from academic medical centers, and two Board members. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the eligibility of the applicants applying pursuant to BPC section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).

On December 10, 2025, the Committee reviewed the qualifications of an applicant from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (CSMC): Dr. Kwon. Committee member Dr. Bruce Gewertz presented Dr. Kwon's qualifications for an SFP to the Committee.

Dr. Kwon earned his medical degree from Seoul National University in 1995, where he also completed his general surgery residency, and later obtained both a master’s and a Ph.D. in medical science. Following his military service, he completed a clinical and research fellowship in liver transplantation and hepato-pancreato-biliary surgical oncology. A world-renowned expert in minimally invasive and living donor liver transplantation, Dr. Kwon established laparoscopic liver and living donor programs at Samsung Medical Center in Korea—programs that have become international models

of excellence. After relocating to the United States in 2017, he joined the Mayo Clinic and later the Cleveland Clinic, where he served as Section Head of Hepatobiliary Surgery and Director of Minimally Invasive Liver Surgery. Under his leadership, the Cleveland Clinic launched the nation's largest laparoscopic donor program. Having performed over 1,000 liver transplants—including 700 living donor transplants—and more than 1,000 laparoscopic liver resections, Dr. Kwon has shared his expertise worldwide through live surgeries and training initiatives.

Dr. Kwon's research includes over 300 peer-reviewed publications on topics such as machine perfusion, bioartificial liver systems, and the molecular biology of hepatitis B in liver cancer. His recruitment addresses a critical need for advanced living donor liver transplantation expertise in the United States, where demand far exceeds the number of available donors. His experience and leadership will greatly expand access to life-saving liver transplant options and advance innovation in minimally invasive liver surgery.

CSMC recruited Dr. Kwon for the position of professor and surgical director of liver transplantation within the Department of Surgery.

EDUCATION

Medical School: Seoul National University College of Medicine; Seoul, South Korea – Doctor of Medicine: 1995

Postgraduate Study: Seoul National University Hospital, Seoul, South Korea – Internship; 1995 - 1996

Seoul National University Hospital, Seoul, South Korea – Residency in General Surgery; 1996 - 2000

Seoul National University Hospital, Seoul, South Korea – Fellowship in General Surgery; 2003 – 2005

If approved for an SFP by the Board, Dr. Kwon will hold a full-time faculty position as professor and will be appointed as surgical director of liver transplantation, both in the Department of Surgery at CSMC. As surgical director, Dr. Kwon will lead the development of a living donor liver program and provide academic leadership in teaching and research related to liver transplantation and hepatobiliary disease. He will offer expertise and training in the surgical management of liver and pancreas transplant patients, including pre- and post-operative care, organ procurement from both deceased and living donors, and the treatment of disorders affecting the liver, biliary system, and pancreas.

SPECIAL FACULTY PERMIT REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS:

The Committee recommended approval of Dr. Kwon for this SFP at CSMC, pursuant to BPC section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).

MEDICAL BOARD 2168 APPLICANT REPORT – YAHAGI, NAOHISA

DATE REPORT ISSUED: January 7, 2026

ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California

SUBJECT: Special Faculty Permit Application
Naohisa Yahagi, M.D.

STAFF CONTACT: Neal Funston, Analyst, Licensing Program

REQUESTED ACTION:

Review the Special Faculty Permit Review Committee’s (Committee) recommendation for a Special Faculty Permit (SFP) appointment for Naohisa Yahagi, M.D., pursuant to California Business and Professions Code (BPC) section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).

BACKGROUND

The Medical Board of California (Board) is authorized to issue an SFP to a physician who is academically eminent and meets all the requirements pursuant to BPC section 2168.1.

The SFP authorizes an individual to practice medicine only within the medical school and its affiliated institutions where the SFP holder is providing instruction as part of the medical school’s educational program, and for which the medical school has assumed direct responsibility.

The Committee is comprised of 14 members: one representative from each of the 11 medical schools in California, one representative from academic medical centers, and two Board members. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations to the Board regarding the eligibility of the applicants applying pursuant to BPC section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).

On December 10, 2025, the Committee reviewed the qualifications of an applicant from Stanford University School of Medicine (Stanford): Dr. Yahagi. Committee member Dr. Pedro Paulo Tanaka presented Dr. Yahagi’s qualifications for an SFP to the Committee.

Dr. Yahagi is an accomplished and internationally recognized physician with extensive research and clinical expertise. He received his M.D. from Niigata University Faculty of Medicine in Japan. He completed his residency in internal medicine at Tokyo Teishin Hospital. Dr. Yahagi attained board certification in internal medicine in 1990, gastroenterology in 1994, and gastroenterological endoscopy in 1995. With decades of experience, he has held faculty positions at the University of Tokyo (1990 – 2005) and Toranomon Hospital (2005 – 2010). Since 2010, he has served as a professor of

medicine and the director of the Division of Research and Development for Minimally Invasive Treatment in the Cancer Center at Keio University.

With over 300 peer-reviewed manuscripts, 400 invited lectures, and 25 book chapters, primarily focused on endoscopy and endoscopic endoluminal minimally invasive surgery for gastrointestinal tumors, Dr. Yahagi has made groundbreaking contributions to the field. He coined the term *endoscopic submucosal dissection* (ESD) and helped develop the Japan Gastroenterological Endoscopy Society guidelines for gastric and colorectal ESD, which now serve as the global standard for endoscopic cancer treatment. His innovative work has also resulted in 34 international patents, reflecting his commitment to advancing medical technology.

Stanford recruited Dr. Yahagi for the position of professor in the Departments of Medicine and Surgery.

EDUCATION

Medical School: Niigata University School of Medicine; Niigata City, Japan – Doctor of Medicine: 1987

Postgraduate Study: Tokyo Teishin Hospital; Tokyo, Japan – Residency in Internal Medicine: 1987 - 1989

Tokyo Teishin Hospital; Tokyo, Japan – Specialized Training in Gastroenterology: 1989 - 1990

The University of Tokyo Hospital; Tokyo, Japan – Specialized Training in Advanced Endoscopy: 1990 – 1992

If approved for an SFP by the Board, Dr. Yahagi will hold a full-time faculty position as professor at Stanford, with a primary appointment in the Department of Medicine (60% full-time equivalent (FTE)) and a secondary appointment in the Department of Surgery (40% FTE). Clinically, he will lead gastrointestinal clinics and perform advanced endoscopic and combined endoscopy-laparoscopic procedures at Stanford Health Care's Palo Alto and Redwood City locations. His research will focus on developing and studying innovative endoscopic techniques, including gastric endoscopic submucosal dissection. In the Department of Medicine, he will serve as Director of Endoscopic Training and Education, leading efforts to enhance endoscopy training for fellows and faculty and to standardize endoscopic practices. His contributions in both departments are expected to improve patient outcomes, enhance healthcare efficiency, and drive the development of new, safer, and more accessible treatment devices and techniques.

SPECIAL FACULTY PERMIT REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS:

The Committee recommended approval of Dr. Yahagi for this SFP at Stanford, pursuant to BPC section 2168.1(a)(1)(B).