

SIGN OF THE TIMES: PART I

Upcoming Changes to ABIM Re-certification

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Historically, when an internist finished his/her internal medicine residency and passed “the boards,” he/she was done. The physician was considered board-certified in internal medicine “for life.” Starting in 1990, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) implemented “Maintenance of Certification,” which in simple terms was an explicit statement that, in order to remain “certified” in internal medicine, a physician had to demonstrate that he/she was “keeping up.” While the details have evolved over time, the basic structure of a 10-year certificate has remained constant for more than 20 years.

Early in 2014, the ABIM will implement changes in its Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program (Table 1). The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the parent organization of all medical certification societies, is requiring more frequent participation in MOC of all board-certified physicians. ABIM and ABMS, along with other external health organizations and the general public, believe that a more continuous MOC program helps us keep pace with changes in the science of medicine and assessment. They recognize that the term “certification” has a different meaning to the general public, implying almost a “warranty” of quality. In addition, they are anticipating possible future changes in credentialing and even licensing that will value physicians who incorporate continuous reassessment of their medical knowledge and clinical skills into their practice.

ABIM has created a website to provide us with more detailed information on the changing requirements, which is available at

<http://moc2014.abim.org>. In summary, *starting in January 2014:*

- All ABIM board-certified physicians, including those holding indefinite certifications (e.g. those certified before 1990), will need to engage in MOC activities more frequently to be reported as “Meeting MOC Requirements.” In order to be considered “Meeting MOC Requirements,” we will need to:
 - Earn *some* MOC points every two years. (We may choose to complete *any* MOC activity to meet the two-year requirement.)
 - Earn *100* MOC points every five years. Points earned every two years will count toward the five-year requirement. We will also have to complete a patient survey and a patient safety module by December 31, 2018, and every five years thereafter.
- We will continue to be required to pass a secure exam once every 10 years. (Beginning in 2014, we will earn MOC points for their first MOC exam attempt.)
- All ABIM board-certified physicians *will be reported as* “Meeting MOC Requirements” at program launch in 2014.
 - Physicians must *enroll* in MOC, activate, and choose which of their current certifications they wish to maintain by March 31, 2014, to be reported as “Meeting MOC Requirements.”
 - Physicians must *complete some* MOC activity by December 31, 2015, to continue to be reported as

“Meeting MOC Requirements.”

- Currently certified physicians will remain “certified” for the time remaining on their certifications, provided a valid license is held.
- In addition, the ABIM will offer multiple payment options for recertification, including annual billing.
- The ABIM has also considered the needs of trainees; physicians in fellowship training will earn 20 MOC points for each year of training they successfully complete.

Clearly this process can be confusing, especially for our subspecialty colleagues who may be certified in one or more subspecialty boards in addition to internal medicine. To help us understand the new requirement, ABIM will launch a redesigned website with a personalized Physician Portal that will show each of us exactly what we need to do over the next few years to continue to meet MOC requirements in January 2014.

SGIM and the MOC Task Force would like to help you navigate the new MOC requirements. We have been working diligently to create and expand SGIM’s MOC offerings. Each year SGIM offers MOC credit sessions as precourses at the annual meeting, and we have been working on ways to give MOC (as well as continuing medical education) credit for participation in annual meeting activities. In the future we anticipate offering other MOC activities. Visit <http://www.sgim.org/communities/work-groups/maintenance-of-certification> for updates and important links as well as

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information you can use to help you understand the upcoming changes.

Despite the program changes, the individual components of MOC will largely remain unchanged. We will continue working together with ABIM to provide relevant options for you to update and maintain your knowledge and performance in practice. For a complete list of MOC-approved products, visit www.abim.org/mk for medical knowledge products and www.abim.org/tool for practice performance products. *SGIM*

Table 1. Changes in Maintenance of Certification

<i>What</i>	<i>When</i>
Overview of changes available at http://moc2014.abim.org	Now
New program launches	January 2014
Log in to ABIM web site to see what you need to do to remain certified	January 2014
Must enroll in MOC, activate, and choose which current certifications to maintain to be reported as "Meeting MOC Requirements"	March 31, 2014
Must complete some MOC activity to be considered "Meeting MOC Requirements"	December 31, 2015