

(PRLEAP.COM) May 9, 2014 - (Philadelphia, PA) A substantial majority of internists have chosen to engage in the American Board of Internal Medicine's (ABIM) newly revised Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program by the May 1 deadline to be reported as "Meeting MOC Requirements". As of May 1, nearly 150,000 physicians were enrolled in ABIM's MOC program-an increase of more than 50,000 since ABIM launched its new program requirements in January.

"Board certification is intended to serve both the public and our diplomates. Physicians rightly have expectations for a credential that recognizes their ongoing efforts to keep up in the specialty, but they also want it to be relevant and reflect what they do in practice," said Richard J. Baron, MD, ABIM president and CEO. "We are listening to the feedback we have received from the community about changes to our program, but at the same time, the public is seeking a way to know that their doctor is 'keeping up in their field'. Maintaining one's certification is one means by which that need can be fulfilled," added Baron.

Since the program launched on January 1, 2014, ABIM has received feedback from medical societies and physicians in practice, some of whom believe the program is onerous, expensive and time consuming. Meanwhile, physicians have claimed more than 245,000 hours of Continuing Medical Education (CME) through their MOC involvement, and nearly 20,000 physicians have already met their MOC requirements through 2015.

"Physicians are engaged in the program and completing the requirements, but MOC has clearly sparked a national conversation focused on what regular assessments are appropriate for ongoing specialty certification. We must look at how the MOC process meets the needs of physicians, patients and others who rely on it as an indicator of a provider's expertise," added Baron.

Other enrollment highlights (as of May 1):

- Among those physicians with at least one time-limited certification (earned after 1990), more than three in four (77%) have enrolled in MOC. In some ABIM specialties, the percentage of physicians participating in MOC is even higher:
 - o 84% of cardiologists with time-limited certifications are enrolled in MOC.
 - o 82% of oncologists with time-limited certifications are enrolled in MOC
 - o 81% of endocrinologists with time-limited certifications are enrolled in MOC.
 - o 83% of gastroenterologists with time-limited certifications are enrolled in MOC.

- "Grandfathers" (those physicians who have lifetime certifications and initially certified 25 or more years ago) are also enrolling in MOC, even though they are not required to do so to keep their certification. One in five (21%) physicians who do not have to maintain any of their

certifications to stay certified has enrolled in MOC. Prior to the launch of the new program, only 2% were engaged in MOC. In addition, at the certificate level:

- o 45% of 'grandfathered' cardiologists are enrolled in MOC.
- o 38% of 'grandfathered' oncologists are enrolled in MOC.
- o 23% of 'grandfathered' endocrinologists are enrolled in MOC.
- o 29% of 'grandfathered' gastroenterologists are enrolled in MOC.

- More than 10,000 physicians in Idaho, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon and West Virginia can choose to be exempted from CME requirements for state licensing because of their participation in MOC.

Data above exclude those diplomates we know to be deceased, retired or over 70 years old.

"For more than a decade, MOC programs have provided public recognition for physicians who are keeping up. Although participation in MOC is a voluntary activity, board certification has sufficient credibility and public acceptance that many hospitals, health systems and patients use it to help decide with whom they want to work," said David H. Johnson, MD, Chair of the ABIM Board of Directors.

"Those who choose to meet ABIM's MOC requirements are differentiating themselves from some of their colleagues. They are saying, 'I'm a cardiologist or oncologist, or whatever specialty they are certified in, who is meeting a standard set by my peers.' That is a powerful statement to make to their patients, and to themselves. It is the gold-standard for defining who is in a medical specialty," said Clarence H. Braddock III, MD, Chair-Elect of the ABIM Board of Directors.

In response to feedback from diplomates and professional societies, ABIM's MOC program is evolving rapidly to provide credit for activities physicians are already doing to maintain their knowledge base and improve their practices. ABIM recognizes more than 270 programs created by medical societies, health systems and others, for fulfilling MOC requirements; and 32,000 diplomates have already fulfilled some requirements of MOC using those pathways.

"We are speaking with leadership from different professional societies as well as other stakeholders-including consumer organizations-to explore ideas that could lead to further improvements in the program over time," Baron said. "We recognize that the MOC program is

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not perfect, and we are committed to constant assessment of it. We are pleased that so many of our colleagues have stepped up and engaged in our program of self-regulation, as well as demonstrated their desire for personal recognition as a board certified specialist by signing up for MOC, and we are gratified that patients, hospitals, medical groups and others see enough value in the credential to rely on it as a marker for knowing that physicians are keeping up."

For media inquiries, contact Lorie Slass at press@abim.org. For more than 75 years, certification by the [American Board of Internal Medicine \(ABIM\)](#)

has stood for the highest standard in internal medicine and its 20 subspecialties and has meant that internists have demonstrated – to their peers and to the public – that they have the clinical judgment, skills and attitudes essential for the delivery of excellent patient care. ABIM is not a membership society, but a non-profit, independent evaluation organization. Our accountability is both to the profession of medicine and to the public. ABIM is a member of the

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