

ABMS Maintenance of Certification

One Specialist's Story

Kim L. Isaacs, MD, PhD
Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine

“Maintenance of Certification, to me, is more than a test. I think of it as ongoing continuing medical education.”

When she renewed her Gastroenterology certification through the American Board of Internal Medicine's Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program, Dr. Isaacs tried to give herself ample time and spaced things out so that she wouldn't get overwhelmed. “I spread things out so as to not get overwhelmed and I studied in spurts,” said Dr. Isaacs. “I found the secure exam very reasonable. The case-based questions were challenging, but reflected things we might see in practice.”

Dr. Isaacs opted to complete the colonoscopy Practice Improvement Module (PIM) for self-evaluation of practice performance credit. She said that while some of the module questions seemed to be targeted more toward physicians in private practice, she answered as best she could and found the chart review techniques very useful. “One of the areas the PIM helped me to identify for improvement was the turnaround time for pathology follow-up. Because we check our own pathology reports, I wrote the patient follow-up letters myself and was forced to tell patients it could take up to three weeks for them to hear from me.” As she examined this practice, she realized that by creating a series of letter templates for commonly-found pathologies, she could reduce the time it took to prepare the letters and now all of her letters go out to patients within seven days. “As a result, my practice is now a bit more efficient and patients are able to get the answers they need in a more timely fashion,” she added.

Dr. Isaacs cites ABIM's medical knowledge modules as a great way to identify weaknesses. “For example, while I'm very familiar with inflammatory bowel disease, I haven't worked with liver diseases in quite a while. These modules helped me to identify further areas of study so I could then go into the literature to ‘bone up’. I now feel more secure in the knowledge I share when teaching Fellows.”

Dr. Isaacs holds general board certification in Internal Medicine and subspecialty certification in Gastroenterology from the American Board of Internal Medicine. She has been in practice for 18 years and her clinical interests include Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Dr. Isaacs is currently Professor of Medicine at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. She earned her medical and graduate degrees from the State University of New York at Stony Brook Health Science Center School of Medicine.



**American Board
of Medical Specialties**

Higher standards. Better care.®

American Board of Medical Specialties
222 North LaSalle Street, Suite 1500
Chicago, Illinois 60601
T: (312) 436-2600
F: (312) 436-2700

www.abms.org

ABMS Maintenance of Certification® (MOC) is a professional development program for physicians who are certified by one of the 24 ABMS Member Boards. The MOC program standards are set by ABMS and independently implemented by the Member Boards. MOC promotes continuous lifelong learning and self assessment to better meet patient, provider and payer expectations for quality care.

© 2009 American Board of Medical Specialties. All rights reserved. The American Board of Medical Specialties, ABMS, the ABMS logo, Higher standards. Better care, ABMS Maintenance of Certification, ABMS MOC and the ABMS Maintenance of Certification logo are registered trademarks of the American Board of Medical Specialties.