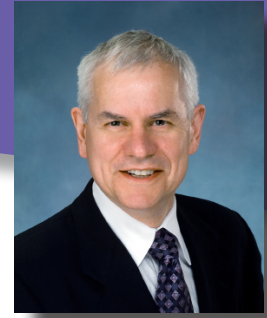


ABMS Maintenance of Certification

One Specialist's Story



Donald H. Lalonde, MD Diplomate, American Board of Plastic Surgery

“Look at the good things that are coming out of Maintenance of Certification. It’s a chance to assess your performance, improve your practice and to feel good about the fact that what you are doing is up to speed and best for your patients.”

Dr. Lalonde likes a good challenge and that’s why he chose to voluntarily participate in the American Board of Plastic Surgery’s recertification process, the predecessor to the board’s Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. As a grandfathered diplomate, he wasn’t required to do so. “It was a challenge to see if I was good enough to take the exam and see how well I could do on it,” he said. Now in this third year of the ten-year MOC cycle for Plastic Surgery, Dr. Lalonde hopes that his participation will be a model for others to engage in the program and recognize the valuable learning experiences it offers.

An example of one learning experience resulted from Dr. Lalonde being both surgeon and patient. For his practice assessment requirement, Dr. Lalonde submitted the cases for ten consecutive carpal tunnel operations to the American Board of Plastic Surgery’s national database. Following his review of the database report which compared his cases to carpal tunnel surgeries performed by other plastic surgeons, Dr. Lalonde read a paper for continuing medical education (CME) that presented good evidence for discontinuing the use of splints as part of post operative carpal tunnel management. After going through his own carpal tunnel cases, comparing them to those of other surgeons, he took the advice from the study he read and shed the splints. This has improved his patient comfort and recovery time, as well as solidified his decision to eliminate splint usage.

Dr. Lalonde believes MOC is a very positive next step in the evolution of board certification. “What is most different about the process is the assessing of my practice and the review of cases I’ve done,” he said. “Comparing my cases to those of other surgeons confirmed that I am using the right surgical methods and also showed me new ways of doing things. This is what was missing from the recertification process. It was just a test.”

Dr. Lalonde holds general board certification in Plastic Surgery and subspecialty certification in Surgery of the Hand from the American Board of Plastic Surgery. He has been a Plastic Surgeon for 25 years and is currently in private practice. Dr. Lalonde earned his medical degree from Queens University Faculty of Health Sciences.



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