

MOC Programs Ahead of Schedule



Quality by Consensus Is Focus of ABMS Annual Meeting

CHICAGO, March 16 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) announced that 20 of its Member Boards received approval of Maintenance of Certification (C) (MOC) programs nearly three years ahead of original projections. Approval of MOC programs for the remaining four boards is expected within the next nine months, at least two years ahead of projections. The announcement was made yesterday during the ABMS annual meeting in Chicago.

"We are thrilled that our Member Boards so swiftly established MOC programs," said Stephen H. Miller, M.D., MPH., ABMS president and CEO. "They have embraced MOC, demonstrating their commitment to quality care."

In the 1970s, ABMS began offering re-certification by examination but, in 2000, the MOC program was adopted to provide a comprehensive assessment of the ongoing competence of physician specialists. The transition to MOC was expected to take up to 10 years for all 24 Member Boards.

In addition to creating an infrastructure for ongoing assessment, ABMS is working to establish nationwide consensus regarding standards of quality specific to each medical specialty.

"Our Member Boards are in the best positions to determine the competencies for their individual specialties and want to collaborate with regulatory and other organizations to establish standards for quality," Miller said. "For example, states which license physicians to practice medicine, in the absence of national standards, could develop individual standards creating inconsistency in how we, as a nation, define quality care. This may not take into account disparate needs of individual medical specialties."

Miller suggests the two greatest challenges of the U.S. healthcare system -- quality and cost containment -- can be achieved through collaboration among all the key parties involved.

"Programs which reduce overuse, underused and misuse of medical resources and care, and pay-for-performance initiatives are among many programs that can help achieve our goals, but the efforts must involve all aspects of the system working in collaboration," he said.

The American Board of Medical Specialties represents 24 approved medical specialty boards. At its inception in 1933, its major focus was initial certification, evaluating the training, qualifications and competence of physician specialists at the outset of their careers. By 2003, more than 85 percent of licensed physicians in the United States were certified by at least one ABMS Member Board. Visit <http://www.abms.org> .

SOURCE The American Board of Medical Specialties

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