

ABMS Maintenance of Certification

One Specialist's Story



James T. McDeavitt, MD Diplomate, American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

“Fostering the habits of lifelong learning will be a critical success factor for physicians in the future. The pace of change driven by disruptive technologies, economics and societal change is incredibly fast. Physicians will need to actively keep up, or be left behind.”

There are always two sides to every situation and, in the case of Maintenance of Certification (MOC), Dr. James McDeavitt sees both a practical and a philosophical line of thought.

On the practical side, Dr. McDeavitt sees MOC ultimately becoming required by the administrative bodies that grant the privilege of seeing patients and pay for services rendered. “Ten years from now, I do not believe our hospital or managed care credentials committees will be impressed that I was grandfathered,” he said. “They will require some demonstration of current competency, and MOC is an important component of that demonstration.”

Taking a more philosophical look, Dr. McDeavitt thinks those who are educators or hold leadership roles should be required to complete MOC. “Educators preach to students and residents the importance of lifelong learning. Medical staff officers across the country establish rules for who is qualified to care for patients in hospitals. Leaders in our field develop expectations for practitioners that impact thousands,” he explained. “I do not believe you can be maximally effective in any of these positions without practicing what you preach. I do not believe you can ask others to do what you are unwilling to do yourself.”

Among other responsibilities, Dr. McDeavitt runs continuing medical education (CME) programs. Because of MOC, the programs are being shifted from lecture style to practice-based offerings. He explained this was done to more proximately tie continuing education into real improvements in care of actual patients and to help support physicians' growing MOC needs.

Regarding his own experience, Dr. McDeavitt has found the process extremely well organized, the online resources easy to navigate, and the board staff readily available to help.

Dr. McDeavitt holds general board certification in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation from the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation. His area of expertise is in brain injury rehabilitation and health system and physician practice administration. He earned his medical degree from Wake Forest University School of Medicine.



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