

## **ABMS, State Medical Societies, and Specialty Societies Meet to Address Concerns about MOC**

In early December, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) met with members of the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), the Specialty Society CEO Consortium (S2C2), and state medical societies to discuss the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) programs of its Member Boards. The meetings focused on the critical issues and concerns that physicians have raised about MOC, what the ABMS Member Boards are doing to resolve these concerns, and how these organizations can work together to create a future continuing Board Certification program that is relevant and valuable to all of our stakeholders, especially to Board Certified physicians and the patients they serve.

State medical and specialty societies voiced their members' concerns about the relevance to practice and the time and cost burden associated with MOC programs. Physician frustration with MOC programs has led to legislative initiatives in many states that would prevent hospitals from requiring physicians to recertify. The state medical society leaders and their members expressed a desire to have ongoing input in the development of the continuing certification programs, a commitment to action and transparency from the Member Boards Community, and improved communication. In addition, they seek more consistency across the Boards' continuing Board Certification programs in order to truly establish best practices that also indicate the programs' impact in improving patient care. All agree on the need to jointly develop solutions for the problems within the House of Medicine, as there are unintended consequences of not doing so, including a decline in the value of Board Certification and the erosion of public trust in the ability of the profession to self-regulate.

Although the specialty societies have worked with the Member Boards to improve MOC programs, they have expressed similar concerns, in particular about physician fear of lost livelihood if they fail to maintain their certificates. Certification has always been conceived as a voluntary process. It has been ABMS' policy for decades that Board Certification should never be a requirement for licensure, nor should it be the sole criterion for hospital and insurance privileging.

Many Boards are already responding to these concerns. The majority of Boards are shifting away from the 10-year, high-stakes exam in favor of alternative assessment pathways that are more convenient, more helpful for learning, and more technologically consistent with how people learn today. Physicians can now conveniently access online longitudinal assessments, which are being introduced by more than half of the Boards, where and when they want on their desktop, tablet, and even smartphone. These assessments, which are more practice-relevant and user-friendly, provide immediate, focused feedback and guidance to resources for further study. Additionally, other organizations, including the Boards are conducting research into the value and patient/practice impact of continuing certification which will serve to inform

and identify best practices and process models. The recently launched [Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future initiative](#) is another opportunity to immediately engage state medical societies and their members, along with specialty societies and their members, to address these issues and help envision a continuing certification system that is meaningful, contemporary, and relevant.

The three communities are committed to collaborating to develop solutions in the process of continuing certification to ensure that it is relevant to the practice of physicians without undue burden as well as fulfill the principles of professional self-regulation. As we move forward together, the work from the Vision Initiative coupled with continued meetings and communication among the groups will be focused on the issues identified and the development and implementation of appropriate solutions in a timely manner.