NEWS RELEASE

ABMS QUALITY FORUM DEMONSTRATES IMPROVED CARE, RELEVANCE OF MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION
Physicians Say Quality Improvement Initiatives are More Meaningful, Beneficial

CHICAGO – June 15, 2015 – Aligning quality improvement initiatives is making the processes physicians use to maintain their Board Certification easier and patients are benefitting. Those are among the findings of research presented at the Forum on Organizational Quality Improvement (QI Forum) hosted by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS).

The QI Forum showcased quality improvement initiatives within the ABMS Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Multi-Specialty Portfolio Approval Program (Portfolio Program), which provides MOC credit for physicians participating in selected QI projects through their hospitals and health systems. The annual QI Forum facilitates discussion among portfolio sponsors and the ABMS Member Boards, to help evolve the MOC program to make it more relevant as a meaningful application of quality and performance improvement.

“The forum enables the sharing of MOC practices, demonstrating how organization-wide efforts are improving care and easing the burden on physicians,” said Lois Margaret Nora, MD, JD, MBA, ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer. “It’s gratifying that physicians are finding this approach not only beneficial, but easier.”

In its second year, the forum featured presentations of 34 improvement efforts from a variety of organizations, including Mayo Clinic, the University of Vermont College of Medicine, the University of Michigan, Carolinas HealthCare System and Children’s Mercy Hospital, Kansas City, among others. Projects ranged from those involving large health systems and thousands of physicians, to cooperative projects between systems in different states, to small, single-center pilot programs.

An emerging theme was the value that participating physicians said they found in the projects, even when they didn’t expect it. For example:

- Nearly 80 percent of physicians said participation in a University of Nebraska initiative helped them implement strategies to improve the rates of immunization of children and adolescents. “I was initially skeptical about the value of the program, yet I found this to be very useful and valuable both in increasing my knowledge for the recertification exam and in providing a basis for improving immunization practices in my offices. I have already recommended this to my partners who are embarking on their recertification process,” noted one participating physician.
- More than 92 percent of physicians participating in the Carolinas HealthCare System QI program said they were likely to recommend the program to their peers.
- More than half of the 2,000 physicians who completed one or more of 67 projects within the Kaiser Permanente QI program expressed an interest in developing more QI skills.
“The growing number of MOC-qualifying improvement initiatives is great news for doctors and patients,” said David W. Price, MD, FAAFP, FACEHP, director of the Portfolio Program. “The range, creativity and participation in the various programs are impressive. The goal of the forum was to keep the momentum going by sharing best practices and key findings to encourage new organizations to participate in the effort and established portfolio organizations to expand their efforts and measure their value. “

Many of the QI Forum presentations featured research demonstrating improved patient care:

- An initiative at Johns Hopkins helped lower patients’ blood pressure significantly (systolic numbers fell an average of 7.4 mmHg and diastolic numbers fell an average of 4.3 mmHg diastolic). Focusing on preventing cardiovascular disease and improving hypertension control rates, the initiative included development of an updated checklist to emphasize several evidence-based interventions.
- An American Academy of Pediatrics QI project to encourage pediatricians to talk to their patients about safety significantly increased the likelihood they would address the important topic with families. Pediatricians participated in a learning session and used screening tools, and as a result, 90 percent discussed the importance of car seat safety with families (vs. 0 percent before the initiative) and 89.9 percent discussed safe sleeping (vs. 18.6 percent prior to the initiative).
- A University of Michigan initiative to enhance healthcare and help family medicine physicians meet MOC requirements included several projects that focused on improving the work flow, ultimately improving the rates of tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (TdaP) immunization in adults (from 30 percent to more than 75 percent) and diabetic foot exams (from 58 percent to 70 percent).

The QI Forum was sponsored by The Multi-Specialty Portfolio Approval Program, the ABMS and the American Board of Pediatrics (ABP). Participants in the forum included representatives from nearly all ABMS Member Boards, 42 Portfolio Program Sponsor organizations, 35 ABP Portfolio Program Sponsor organizations and more than 150 quality-driven organizations considering participation in the program.

The ABMS Portfolio Program has engaged more than 6,800 physicians in QI initiatives at hospitals and health systems across the country, driving demonstrated improvements in care outcomes and recognizing their participation with MOC-eligible credits. For more information about participation in the MOC Portfolio Program and sponsor research projects, visit the program website at http://mocportfolioprogram.org/become-a-portfolio-sponsor/.

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