



**American Board
of Medical Specialties**
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Response to the American Medical Association Policy on Secure Recertification Exam

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is opposed to the American Medical Association's (AMA) call for the immediate end to any mandatory, secure recertifying examination by ABMS or other certifying organizations as part of the recertification process for those specialties that still require a secure, high-stakes recertification examination.

Consumers, patients, hospitals and other users of the Board Certification credential expect board certified physicians to be up-to-date with the knowledge, judgment and skills of their specialty – both at the point of initial certification and along the physician's career path – and to verify it through an external assessment. The privilege to self-regulate which physicians enjoy demands that we meet that expectation with more than just continuing medical education.

Continuing medical education is an important component of a physician's continuous learning and an important part of Maintenance of Certification (MOC), but by itself is not sufficient to verify that a physician is up to date. The other components of MOC – professionalism, external assessment of knowledge, judgment and skills, and improvement in medical practice – are also important.

National certifying and recertifying examinations evaluate certified physicians against an objective, national standard in a given specialty, which is important both to patients and to providers who are making credentialing and privileging decisions. It is a critical component of our profession's commitment to self-regulation and to the public trust.

ABMS Member Boards and the AMA Council on Medical Education have been working together to modernize the Boards' recertifying examination processes and more than half of the ABMS Member Boards are in the process of developing and piloting alternative assessment models. ABMS Member Boards are working to make MOC more relevant and customized to individual practices, and are adopting changes to their assessments to make them less burdensome, more formative and more relevant to practice.

ABMS urges the AMA leadership and House of Delegates to reevaluate this policy, which places the established system of professional self-regulation at risk and erodes the public's trust that board certified physicians will hold themselves to the highest standards.