



# TRACERS

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## From the Desk of the Chair

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Dear colleagues,

In my last letter to you, I mentioned that the ABNM wants to give you value. In this letter, I want to give you a rough idea of where your money goes when you pay your Maintenance of Certification (MOC) dues. This should help you understand the value of supporting the ABNM through payment of your ABNM MOC Annual Dues.

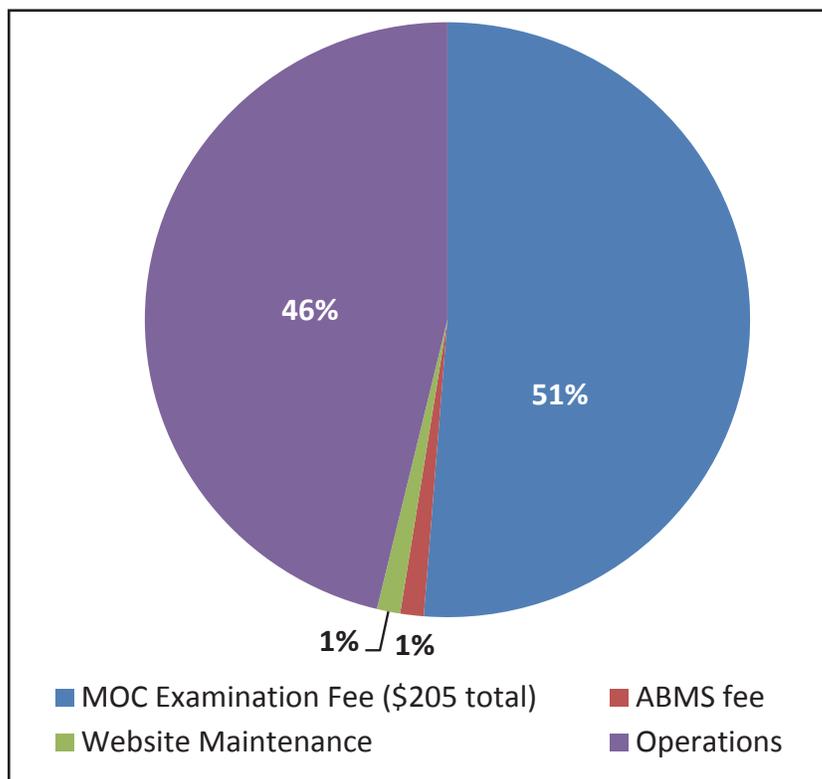
As one of the 24 boards recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), ABNM is tasked with “serving the public through assurance of high quality patient care by establishing standards of training, initial certification, and continuing competence of physicians providing nuclear medicine diagnostic and therapeutic services.” There has been some negative press regarding specialty boards and their finances in the recent past<sup>[1]</sup> which would suggest that some boards are making big profits from their tests. Let me be the first to assure you that this is not the case for the ABNM. The ABNM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the yearly revenue obtained is fairly modest given the small size of our specialty. It may be helpful to know that the members of the board of directors and officers of the ABNM are not paid. We are all volunteer members. The only paid individuals are the ABNM office staff, which includes, the Executive Director, the Associate Executive Director and four stellar employees who are located in St. Louis, Missouri.

As you may recall from a fairly recent article by our distinguished former Associate Executive Director, Dr. Tony Parker<sup>[2]</sup>, the Board does more than just write tests. To be honest, when I first joined the board, I was surprised about all of the different tasks a specialty board performs. Of course, a great portion of our work involves testing (the In-Training Exam (ITE), Certification Exam, Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Exam and now CertLink™) and question writing (or as we call it “item writing”) and discussion. We manage a question (or item) database, utilize the services of PearsonVue to bring the exams to you and print the ITE and mail it to the different training programs. We also have a psychometrician consultant who ensures that the examinations are statistically valid. We now have additional cost for the software developed by the ABMS for CertLink™. As you can see in the pie chart below, about half of your \$400 goes to the exam work that we do. It is important to realize that this money doesn’t fully cover the costs of the exams depending on the changing numbers of people sitting for the exam. I should note that there is an exam fee which will soon be going away. The exam fee was originally \$2050, but when paid equally over 10 years it becomes \$205.

The next largest piece of the pie is the “operations” piece. This includes payroll for the ABNM office staff and in person meetings which are vital to the Board’s success. In addition, this includes requests for verification of board certifications (e.g. from state boards and medical credentialers), audit of CME attestation, addressing the notifications from the Disciplinary Action Notification System (DANS), Federation of State Medical Licensing Board (FSMB) and the ABMS.

A couple of small slices of the pie are left: our ABMS fee which is very important. I believe Dr. Parker said this best, "In addition to providing a forum for the boards to share and learn from each other, the ABMS represents its members' interests to payers and regulators. Although we are a small board, we have a seat at the table, where we can make sure our special interests are heard. The ABMS evaluates each board's activities to provide additional credibility, especially to other organizations and licensing bodies that agreed upon standards are followed." The last slice is that of our website maintenance; this is our important direct link to you. Remember we need you to log on to the website to verify your information once a year; this is the best way to maintain your MOC profile.

Please make sure to take a look at the CertLink™ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) in this issue. We want to ensure that you have all the information. Registration for the CertLink™ pilot soft launch is now open! CertLink™ promises to be very exciting and we hope you will participate in the pilot January 2018 or the full roll out which is slated for April 2018. If the FAQ's are in any way unclear, please let us know so we can address them; you can also email your additional questions to [CertLink@abnm.org](mailto:CertLink@abnm.org). The ABNM also has a dedicated page for CertLink™ on the ABNM website ([www.abnm.org](http://www.abnm.org)). Be sure to visit our website to find out how you can get involved today!



Very sincerely,

*Erin Grady, MD*

Erin Grady, MD, CCD, FACNM

#### **References:**

1. Drolet BC, Tandon VJ. Fees for Certification and Finances of Medical Specialty Boards. *JAMA*. 2017;318:477–479.
2. Parker JA. Value of ABNM Certification and MOC to Diplomates and the Public. *J Nucl Med*. 2016;57:10N,13N.