

Message from the Associate Executive Director

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Those of you who registered for the MOC exam this year may have noted that the cost of the exam has decreased from last year. The annual MOC fee now includes 1/10th of the cost of the MOC exam. **Over the next 9 years the exam cost will continue to decrease to \$0.** We hope most diplomates will find the annual fee more convenient than a lump fee on the exam year. This fee structure is also more compatible with a general trend toward more emphasis on continuous MOC and de-emphasis of the exam.

The certifying and MOC exams are an important function of the board. Unlike some boards, the directors write the questions and assemble the exams. Although it is a time consuming task, we attempt to continuously improve the quality and reliability of the exam. This year we have changed the exam committee structure. One of the directors, **Dr. Janis O'Malley has been appointed to a multi-year position as overall exam chair.** The overall Chair will provide continuity and direction so that the structure and the coverage of the exam more closely follows the knowledge needed for nuclear medicine practice.

The number of physicians taking both exams is increasing. The number who will be taking the certifying exam this year is 99, the number who will be taking the MOC exam is 101.

Diplomates with non-time-limited certificates awarded in 1972-1976 are scheduled to take the MOC exam by 2015. Since the MOC exam can be taken up to 2 years before required without changing the date of the next exam, some **1972-1976 diplomates may wish to take the exam in 2013.** Historically, our diplomates have performed exceptionally well on the MOC exam; however, taking the exam early reduces the anxiety about passing on the first attempt. The 1972-1976 diplomates, who pass the exam in 2013, will continue to be listed as participating in MOC. There is no penalty for taking the exam early. Based on our current 10 year cycle, the next exam will be required in 2025; however, it is likely that the exam cycle will shorten in the future. Non-time-limited diplomates will continue to be certified even if they do not pass the MOC exam when required; however, they will not be listed as participating in MOC. Participation in MOC is expected to become increasingly important for reimbursement, credentialing, and possibly licensure.

Diplomates with time-limited certificates who do not pass the MOC exam when required lose their ABNM certification. The **requirements for reentry to certification** depend upon how long a physician has not been certified. A diplomate, who has not been certified for 5 years or less, may regain certification by fulfilling the requirements to take the MOC exam and successfully passing the exam. A diplomate, who has not been certified for more than 5 years, must apply for and pass the certifying exam. All of the requirements for participation in MOC (except passing the exam on time) are required to apply for the exams.

The ABNM is one of the eleven American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) boards that is taking part in [MOC:PQRS program](#) (Physician Quality Reporting System) this year. The CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) [PQRS program](#) provides participating physicians an incentive of ½% increase in reimbursement. **The MOC:PQRS program provides and additional ½% increase in reimbursement** for those physicians who engaged in MOC "more frequently".



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In order to take part in the MOC:PQRS program, you must be participating the PQRS program. This year, the ABNM definition of “more frequently” for time-limited certificate holders has two requirements:

1. Either

- a) 30 CME credits instead of the standard 25 CME credit requirement

OR

- b) MOC exam each 9 years instead of 10.

2. One Practice Performance Assessment (PPA) activity (credit) every year instead of allowing a 3-year grace period.

Non-time-limited certificate holders are not required to participate in MOC; therefore, for them “more frequently” is defined as participating in MOC.

This year’s incentives, an expense for CMS, would be generously referred to as modest. However, the plan for the PQRS system is to evolve from an incentive to a penalty. At that point, there could be an increase in these percentages.

The MyMOC portion of the ABNM website is undergoing a series of improvements to more accurately reflect the ABNM requirements. Last year, we began sending frequent reminders (each 2 months) about gaps in achieved requirements to our diplomates. Several diplomates provide helpful feedback that let us identify problems with MyMOC. When the update is complete, we will restart the frequent email reminders. Since we are a small board, we try to be as cost conscious as possible implementing improvements. We shall depend on diplomate feedback to identify any remaining problems with the website. When the frequent e-mail reminders restart, we would greatly appreciate any feedback you can provide us (abnm@abnm.org) about the reminders and about MyMOC.



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