

MOC Changes' Impact on ASN Programs; Nephrology Board Formed

By Jeffrey S. Berns, MD, Chair, ABIM Nephrology Board

As you have likely heard, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) recently took action to address many concerns from the community regarding the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program.

On February 3, 2015, ABIM president Richard J. Baron, MD, MACP, apologized for the mistakes that were made with the previous changes to MOC and announced significant and immediate changes to the program via e-mail to all ABIM Board-Certified physicians (Table 1).

Table 2 presents a brief look at the impact of ABIM changes on ASN member activities for MOC.

In addition to the changes to the MOC program, ABIM is also changing the way it operates through recent changes to its governance structure (see below) and by taking significant steps to engage the physician community in a dialogue on the MOC program to help design a program that reflects the shared values of the medical community, and provides a better framework for physicians to demonstrate that they are keeping up with the changes in their disciplines.

To ensure that ABIM is meeting the needs of the medical community, ABIM plans to gather feedback through the changes to its governance as well as by asking physicians directly about their vision for their specialties, the MOC program, and their opinions about what it means to be a doctor today. ABIM has also created "Transforming ABIM," a Google+ Community that you can join, to ask questions and share ideas, and a blog.

In addition, ABIM has posted information about "Where the Money Goes" and many of its financial reports on its website.

ABIM has altered its governance structure in some important ways. Perhaps most notable is the formation of new specialty boards. In the past, the only specialty-specific committees were the test writing committees, which were charged primarily with developing new exam questions. Due to the amount of time and effort involved in this process, test writing committee members had little time to consider specialty-specific issues related to initial certification or MOC. Recognizing that there was a need for ABIM to adapt its MOC program to more closely align with the needs and specific practice patterns of its diplomates within each specialty and to also examine requirements for taking initial certifying exams, ABIM established these specialty boards to:

- Define, refine and set standards for certification and MOC in the discipline;
- Perform oversight/review of performance assessments in the discipline; and
- Build partnerships with societies and other organizational stakeholders.

The secure examination will continue to be developed by a separate, dedicated group of physicians, but will now be referred to as exam committees, i.e., the Nephrology Board Exam Committee. The Exam Committee has been charged with maintaining exam "blueprints" that appropriately mirror the specialty's scope of knowledge and practice for both initial certification and MOC test takers.

As chair of the ABIM's Nephrology Board, I am excited to have this opportunity to introduce the role of this newly formed Nephrology Specialty Board and its members.

The ABIM Nephrology Board, along with nine other specialty Boards, held their inaugural meetings in fall 2014. Each of the specialty boards is comprised of practicing ABIM Board-Certified physicians, an intra-professional team member, and a patient representative. Members of the ABIM Nephrology Board include:

Jeffrey S. Berns, MD, Chair, Philadelphia, PA

I am a board certified internist and nephrologist and Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, where I am Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, Associate Chief of the Renal, Electrolyte, and Hypertension Division, and Director of the Nephrology Fellowship Training Program.

Laura Greenberg, RN, Cherry Hill, NJ

Laura Greenberg, the board's intra-professional member, is a Clinical Nurse at Penn Medicine's Renal, Electrolyte, and Hypertension Clinic and the Lead Clinical Nurse overseeing Penn Medicine's combined Renal and Rheumatology Ambulatory Practice.

Edward R. Jones, MD, Philadelphia, PA

Dr. Jones, a board-certified internist and nephrologist, is a practicing nephrologist in Philadelphia and a Chairman of Kidney Care Partners. He also is a Counselor to the Renal Physician Association (RPA).

Kevin Longino, MBA, Greenwich, CT

Kevin Longino, our patient representative, was diagnosed with an inherited kidney disease in 2000 and received a transplanted kidney in 2004. He continues to enjoy excellent health and has become a passionate advocate for kidney health and organ donor registration.

Andrew S. Narva, MD, Bethesda, MD

Dr. Narva, a board-certified internist and nephrologist, is the Director of the National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) at the National Institutes of Health and previously served as Director of the Kidney Disease Program for the Indian Health Service.

Jerry Yee, MD, Detroit, MI

Dr. Yee, a board certified internist and nephrologist, is the Division Head of the Henry Ford Hospital's Division of Nephrology and Hypertension and Clinical Professor of Internal Medicine, Wayne State University.

Rudolph A. Rodriguez, MD, Seattle, WA

Dr. Rodriguez, a board certified internist and nephrologist, is the Director of the Hospital & Specialty Medicine Service Line at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System and a Professor and Vice Chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Washington.

Suzanne G. Watnick, MD, Portland, OR

Dr. Watnick, a board certified nephrologist, is a Professor of Medicine at Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) and the Medical Director of the Portland VA Medical Center Dialysis Unit in Portland, OR. She also serves as the training program director for the Nephrology Fellowship at OHSU.

I am honored to lead such a diverse group of professionals from across the spectrum of nephrology and

look forward to sharing updates with you as we embark on our work of ensuring the importance and value of board certification in Nephrology and the relevancy of MOC to nephrologists across the country.

Further information about ABIM's new governance structure may be found via the ABIM website: <http://www.abim.org/about/governance>. ●

Jeffrey S. Berns, MD, is chair of the ABIM Nephrology Board. He is an internist and nephrologist and Professor of Medicine and Pediatrics at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Table 1

Changes to ABIM MOC Program

- Effective immediately, ABIM is **suspending the Practice Assessment, Patient Voice, and Patient Safety requirements for at least two years**. This means that no nephrologist will have his or her certification status changed for not having completed activities in these areas for at least the next two years. Diplomates who are currently not certified but who have satisfied all requirements for Maintenance of Certification except for the Practice Assessment requirement will be issued a new certificate this year.
- Within the next six months, ABIM will change the language used to publicly report a diplomate's MOC status on its website from "meeting MOC requirements" to "**participating in MOC.**"
- ABIM is updating the Internal Medicine MOC exam. The update will focus on making the exam more reflective of what physicians in practice are doing, **with any changes to be incorporated beginning fall 2015**, with more subspecialties to follow.
- **MOC enrollment fees will remain at or below** the 2014 levels through at least 2017.
- **By the end of 2015, ABIM will assure new and more flexible ways for internists to demonstrate self-assessment of medical knowledge** by recognizing most forms of ACCME-approved Continuing Medical Education.

Table 2

Impact of ABIM changes on ASN member activities for Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

ABIM 2014 MOC Requirements	ABIM 2015 MOC Changes	ASN Activities
Verification of Credentials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid, unrestricted, and unchallenged medical license. 	Unchanged.	N/A
Enroll in MOC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required. Pay annual or 10-year fees. Reported as “meeting MOC requirements.” 	Enroll in MOC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required. Pay annual or 10-year fees. Change—fees remain at or below 2014 levels through (at least) 2017. Reported as “meeting MOC requirements.” Change—publicly report status as “participating in MOC” in the next 6 months. 	N/A
Earn MOC Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an MOC activity every 2 years. Earn 100 MOC points every 5 years (at least 20 points in medical knowledge). Earn points through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical knowledge activities. Practice assessment activities. Patient safety activities. Patient Voice activities. 	Earn MOC Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an MOC activity every two years. Earn 100 MOC points every 5 years (at least 20 points in medical knowledge). Earn points through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical knowledge activities. Practice assessment activities. Change—requirement suspended for at least 2 years. Patient safety activities. Change—requirement suspended for at least 2 years. Patient Voice activities. Change—requirement suspended for at least 2 years. 	Medical knowledge activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NephSAP (Nephrology Self-Assessment Program): 10 points/issue. KSAP (Kidney Self-Assessment Program): 25 points per module. ASN Highlights 2015 Self-Assessment: 8 MOC points. “Maintenance of Certification: NephSAP Review and ABIM Modules” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidney Week early program. 50 MOC points. Awards CME credit. Practice assessment activities: ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialysis Practice Improvement Module: 20 MOC points. Kidney Transplantation Practice Improvement Module: 20 MOC points. Patient safety activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None currently available from ASN. Patient Voice activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None currently available from ASN.
Pass the MOC exam	Pass the MOC exam Change—Internal Medicine exam updated with focus on making exam more reflective of what physicians in practice are doing, beginning fall 2015. More subspecialty exams to follow.	Board Review Course and Update—Live. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offered annually. Awards CME credits. MOC points prohibited. Board Review Course and Update—Online. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASN Learning Center. Presented in topic modules. Awards CME credits. MOC points

¹Although “suspended” (not needed to fulfill MOC requirements for recertification), MOC points will continue to be awarded for completed practice improvement modules.

New Award Supports Kidney Research Scholar from Historically Disadvantaged Background

ASN recently announced the society is partnering with the Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program (AMFDP) of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to support the career development of a kidney research scholar from a historically disadvantaged background.

The AMFDP awards 4-year post-residency grants to support the research and career development of physicians and dentists from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program, a long-running initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is designed to increase the number of faculty who achieve senior rank in academic medicine and dentistry and to foster the development of succeeding classes of such physicians and dentists. You may apply at <http://asn.kdny.info/IKdZJ>.