Resolution No. 606 (Kansas C) - New Era of Maintenance of Certification: Streamline, Simplify and Reduce Cost

Action Taken by the 2015 Congress of Delegates: Referred to the Board of Directors

This resolution was referred to the Board of Directors. Please address questions to Clif Knight at cknigh@aafp.org.

Report as of 1/31/2016:

A letter was sent to the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) in response to this resolution. In addition, this topic was discussed between the AAFP, ABFM and other family organizations in January 2016. At that time the ABFM felt they had met the intention of the letter by their recent changes described in their winter 2016 newsletter "The Phoenix - A Diplomates' Newsletter."

Resolution No. 606 (Kansas C)

New Era of Maintenance of Certification: Streamline, Simplify and Reduce Cost

Introduced by the Kansas Chapter

Referred to the Reference Committee on Education

WHEREAS, Dissatisfaction with the Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians (MC-FP) process is high, as evidenced by results of a July 2015 survey of active members by the Kansas chapter, and

WHEREAS, issues raised by survey respondents include:

- Concerns about the cost – over 76% of respondents were dissatisfied with the cost of MC-FP, and
WHEREAS, there is minimal evidence that mandatory recertification results in improved patient care, and

WHEREAS, respondents note that mandatory recertification is likely to reduce access to care by hastening physicians’ retirement, and

WHEREAS, a recent study in the Annals of Internal Medicine, “A Cost Analysis of the American Board of Internal Medicine’s Maintenance-of-Certification Program,” analyzed the cost of maintenance of certification (MOC) and concluded that time costs account for 90% of the expected cumulative total for MOC ($5.7 billion over 10 years) and this time could sometimes otherwise be dedicated to patient care, and

WHEREAS, Clinical Simulation (Part II) and Performance in Practice (Part IV) are viewed by respondents as being particularly onerous, while holding little to no benefit for their learning, or practice of medicine, and

WHEREAS, the American Board of Internal Medicine suspended key elements of their requirements due to many similar concerns expressed by internists, and

WHEREAS, it is clear from survey results that many members confuse the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Board of Family Medicine of their respective roles, and

WHEREAS, members believe that it is important to continue to learn but feel this MC-FP process is outdated, expensive, and broken beyond repair, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians open a new dialogue with the American Board of Family Medicine and state in the strongest terms possible that changes must be made to Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for Family Physicians to usher in a new era of MOC with these guiding principles in mind:

- Streamline, and
- Simplify, and
- Reduce both direct and indirect costs, and
- Clearly communicate, and be it further
RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians urge the American Board of Family Medicine to do away with Clinical Simulation (in Part II), and all of Part IV until the new era of Maintenance of Certification is in place and is clearly communicated, and be it further.

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians urge the American Board of Family Medicine to provide a simple, seamless pathway back to board certification for those who lost it due to issues with this process, and be it further.

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) quickly embark upon an educational effort for members to clearly delineate the American Board of Family Medicine and the AAFP as separate organizations.

(Received 8/6/15)

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Background Information**

Board Certification has been recognized as an indicator of a physician’s commitment to providing quality patient care. The American Board of Medical Specialties emphasizes that ongoing MOC activities highlight ongoing professional development and assessment that is aligned with other professional requirements. AAFP is supportive of synergy and alignment of Maintenance of Certification with Maintenance of Licensure requirements, affording opportunities of enhanced patient care for populations of patients and personalized learning opportunities for individual physicians with avoidance of duplicative or extraneous work not directly impacting the practice of medicine.

http://www.abms.org/board-certification/a-trusted-credential/ (http://www.abms.org/board-certification/a-trusted-credential/)

There is acknowledgement of inconsistencies among the 24 certifying boards in implementing primary certification as well as Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and the AAFP is working to explore the extent, value (positives and negatives of differences in requirements) and natural consequences of these inconsistencies, along with the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS).

As systems integrating patient data through interpretation of electronic health records mature, performance metrics utilizing valid evidence-based quality measures create alternate pathways for patient outcome comparison and novel mechanisms to measure physician practices and communities at local, regional, and national levels. Registries further solidify comparison models. Information specifically found about the ABFM as an organization on the AAFP website is limited and one example follows: The American Board of Family Medicine (www.theabfm.org) (http://www.theabfm.org) is the second largest medical specialty board in the United States. Founded in 1969, the ABFM is a voluntary, not-for-profit, private organization whose mission is to improve the health of the public. The ABFM’s purpose is to establish and maintain standards of excellence in the specialty of Family Medicine, improve medical education training in Family Medicine, and evaluate the fitness of specialists in Family Medicine who apply for and hold certificates.

The AAFP refers and hyperlinks directly to the ABFM when possible.

**Current Policy**

**Certification/Maintenance of Certification**

http://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/certification-maintenance.html

(Please see Page 319 in the 2011 Transactions for details.)

(Please see Page 129 in the 2012 Transactions for follow-up details.)

**Resolution No. 602 to the 2011 COD (Adopted):**

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) encourage the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) to encourage the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) to explore alternative possibilities to replace the written proctored exam part of the family medicine Maintenance of Certification. Please see Page 319 in the 2011 Transactions for details.

**Resolution No. 606 to the 2012 COD (Not Adopted):**

RESOLVED, That the American Academy of Family Physicians work with the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) to identify strategies that would promote fairness in the transition to the new timetable for the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process, which could include, but not be limited to:

- "grandfathering" of those who have participated in the process for many years, such that they could maintain certification for a seven year period after successful completion of the recertifying examination;
- completing additional Part II programs; or
- providing documentation from their health system of exemplary performance or contributions in quality of care initiatives outside ABFM Part IV content areas.

Please see Page 339 in the 2012 Transactions for details.

**Prior Board Actions**

Received for information a recommendation that the Board of Directors express a higher level of displeasure with the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) regarding the Maintenance of Certification process and, further, that they communicate more directly to the AAFP members the difference between the AAFP and the ABFM and the Academy’s dissatisfaction with the MOC process as it has been presented. B2005, March 7, 9-12, p. 21.

Update on recent developments with the American Board of Family Medicine regarding the maintenance of certification issue. B2005, May 3-5, p. 16.
Received for information a copy of the letter from Dr. Frank Kane, Board Chair of the ABFM in response to the Academy’s letter dated November 30, 2004 indicating that the ABFM has incorporated many of the suggestions made by the AAFP in to the MC-FP program.

Approval of a recommendation that the AAFP Board of Directors approve NCSC Resolution No. 15, Resolved Clause 2 which states “That the AAFP encourage the ABFM to incorporate into the maintenance of certification program education materials covering disparities in the treatment of minority patients and cultural proficiency.”
B2006, September 8-9, p. 15.

Approval of a recommendation that the AAFP increase involvement in monitoring and, as appropriate influencing activities, involving Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and Maintenance of Licensure (MOL) requirements given potential implications for the AAFP’s role as an accreditor and provider of continuing medical education for members and other health care professionals.

Approval of a recommendation from the Commission on Education that the AAFP Board of Directors agree that 2011 Congress of Delegates Resolution No. 602 “Maintenance of Certification” has been carried out and no further action is needed.

Approval of a letter to the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) regarding the Maintenance of Certification Proposed Standards.
BC1:12013, December 5, p. 3.