

Opinion

MOC Preparation: Did You Say No Additional Charge?

One of my pet peeves is the à la carte approach to funding adopted by the most expensive vacation destinations. I'm sure you have experienced the umbrage of discovering a surcharge known as the "resort fee" upon checking out of an upscale hotel. Typically 10 to 15 percent of the nightly room rate, it covers such niceties as a working telephone in your room, bell service for the luggage (if only they had told us that before we tipped the guy upon arrival), nightly turndown service, and the concierge, but does not cover any room service delivery charges, Internet access or tipping in the restaurants. The trend is so pervasive that I have been charged a "resort fee" in midtown Manhattan, where sandy beaches and soft tropical breezes are *not*. Airlines are getting into it as well, with \$5 snack fees and, yet to come, coin-operated toilets.

Although I don't have the time required to take a cruise, if I did, I doubt I could relax and kick back, knowing that everything I do short of jumping overboard will result in an additional charge. Come to think about it, there's probably a "rescue fee" for such occasions. Mind you, I don't mind the ante on those rare occasions when I play poker, but then I didn't have to buy entrance to the room where the poker game was being held, either. Imagine my amazement when I went to a resort in South America to attend a meeting and learned that everything was included. Imagine that, an all-inclusive fee, even down to

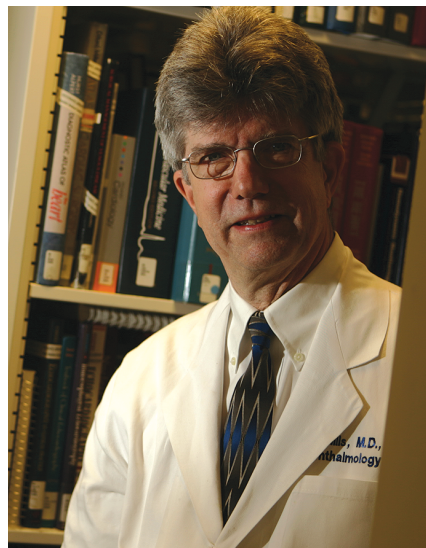
the pool towels and bottled water in the room. That's when I found out the rest of the world has wised up a lot sooner than we in the good ole U.S. of A. Those travelers can actually budget vacation expenses based on what they are quoted.

Well, I've heard some colleagues grumble that their membership in professional organizations is just the ante that allows them to pay extra for a host of additional services, even those which they are practically required to access. The Academy has not been immune to those criticisms, especially with regard to preparation for the Maintenance of Certification exams of the American Board of Ophthalmology. It has even led to accusations, untrue though they are, that the ABO and Academy are in cahoots to the detriment of members.

What better way to blunt those criticisms than to make MOC preparation materials a member benefit, available for no additional charge? That is exactly what Academy leadership has decided to do, effective with the launch of the Ophthalmic News and Education (O.N.E.) Network last November. As detailed in this column in October 2007, O.N.E. is an online resource available to members free as a member benefit. There's a lot in O.N.E. besides MOC prep, including all of the Academy educational content, fully searchable, plus selected non-Academy content such as ophthalmology journals and the *Wills Eye Manual* (coming soon). In addition, O.N.E. has a library of surgical videos,

conversations with experts, and personalized curriculum tools.

So, if you are a time-limited ABO certificate holder, and due to take the MOC exam between now and 2010, you can rejoice that the MOC Exam Study Kit Version 2.0 will be available to you online just by signing in as a member. You'll find it good preparation for an exam you don't want to take. If you aren't due to take the exam, you might use the Kit for self-assessment of your knowledge. Organized by subspecialty, but including Core knowledge important to all, the Kit offers a good way to confidentially spot those lacunae we all have. And best of all, it won't cost you anything.



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