

Opinion

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Maintenance of Certification (MOC): Will You Enter Next Year?

Yes, it has been more than two years since Opinion outlined the American Board of Ophthalmology (ABO) plan for MOC. Then, it was only a gossamer scaffold; today it is on the fast track for implementation in 2006, when it will completely replace the old recertification

program. In response to these changes, the Academy assembled teams of experts to identify those items of knowledge that have the greatest clinical relevance to a practicing ophthalmologist. This knowledge base project, under the able direction of Richard L. Abbott, MD, has produced a Practicing Ophthalmologist's Curriculum on a very tight time line.

The ABO already has used it to construct the test questions to be used on the PORT (Periodic Ophthalmic Review Test) and DOCK (Demonstration of Ophthalmic Cognitive Knowledge) exam components of MOC in 2006. A diplomate first selects one or two topic areas relevant to his or her practice, plus a mandatory core module consisting of items every ophthalmologist should know, and completes a PORT exam as an online pretest. Then the diplomate visits one of hundreds of computerized testing facilities nationwide to take the DOCK exam, which is on the same topic areas as the PORT.

If you are in the 2006 MOC group, you will not be hung out to dry! The Academy is developing a comprehensive resource for the tools and information needed to help you meet the MOC requirements. It's called Academy MOC

Essentials and may be found at www.aao.org/AME. Already available is a summary of MOC requirements and deadlines, the practice emphasis areas and topics covered by PORT and DOCK, ethics courses to satisfy the CME requirement for MOC, and Review/Claim CME, which is a way to organize your personal CME credits. This fall, the Academy will introduce an in-depth study guide to assist in preparation for PORT and DOCK, along with an online self-assessment tool to enable you to evaluate your knowledge, prepare for the exam and demonstrate improvement over time.

The public doesn't want to fly in your airplane if you haven't maintained your flying certification, and likewise they don't want surgery from you if you aren't current. Responding to this trend, the Federation of State Medical Licensing Boards is considering periodic mandatory testing for renewal of state medical licenses. Already in place in a few states for physicians moving there from elsewhere, relicensing requirements involve taking a test in *general medicine*. Fortunately, there is considerable support for the concept that if a physician has completed a MOC

process by his or her specialty board, that will serve as a substitute for the general medicine exam. If this idea takes hold among the state licensing bodies, there will be a stampede by lifetime certificate holders to voluntarily enter the MOC process. I figure I'm going to beat the rush. The half of my fellow ABO Directors who have not yet recertified will be voluntarily joining me in the 2006 MOC group. We'll have some additional company. Most of the ophthalmology department chairs in attendance at last year's meeting of the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology, almost all of whom were lifetime certificate holders, informally said they would enter MOC as a sign of leadership. Maybe you will, too.



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