



October 21, 2015

Dear Members:

Earlier this month, I along with other ACR leaders, met with ABIM CEO Richard Baron, MD for a candid discussion on the future of MOC. The [ACR's MOC Position statement](#) and the [ABIM's Assessment 2020 Report](#) served as catalysts for our discussion. As the ABIM works towards transforming the MOC program, Dr. Baron explained that societies and diplomates should expect incremental changes, like the new [ABIM and ACCME collaboration](#), rather than a “big reveal” of a single new program. I believe the ABIM is working towards improving the MOC program and it is in our best interests to participate in the process.

What's next?

**ABIM has given top priority to changing the MOC exam:** The ABIM Assessment 2020 report recommends replacing the 10-year secure MOC exam. Although a new format has not been determined, changing the MOC exam aligns with the ACR's position that the current secure, closed book, high-stakes examination is not appropriate for recertification. The ACR considers an open-book examination or CME activities with assessments to be more appropriate options for confirming that physicians are keeping up with medical knowledge in their field.

The ABIM Assessment 2020 report explores several options for evaluating medical knowledge and clinical competency. For example, it suggests that recertification might include a series of low-stakes assessments taken at home or in the workplace with open-book and closed-book components. Successful achievement of these low-stakes milestones would, at some point (for example, every five years), roll up into a high-stakes recertification decision. A longer examination (or other form of evaluation) might only be necessary in the absence of satisfactory completion of the low-stakes assessments. This approach differs from the current MOC program, as it includes ABIM feedback and encourages self-reflection.

The ABIM Assessment 2020 report also calls for “more frequent, less burdensome assessments.” I am not yet certain how that goal can be attained, but the ACR will continue to engage and closely monitor developments in this area. It will take time to test these new concepts and create the appropriate assessments. Although it is difficult to confirm a timeline, Dr. Baron anticipated it would be at least 2-2.5 years before there would be a new test format. If you are choosing to continue to participate in MOC and maintain your certificate, the every ten year requirement for an exam is still in place.

We were also apprised about the current ABIM MOC [rheumatology blueprint](#) update that will be rolled out in the next 1-2 years to better reflect what rheumatologists are doing in clinical practice. This effort will be led by the [ABIM Rheumatology Subspecialty Board](#) with input from ACR members.

**Practice Assessment:** Although this is not a current requirement of the program, ABIM continues to recognize physicians for their quality improvement activities in MOC and they can continue to earn points by doing them.

The ACR encourages rheumatologists to participate in quality improvement activities, and we will be building the RISE registry with the goal in mind of meeting regulatory requirements and earning MOC credit.

The ACR continues to advocate that the ABIM *not* reinstate the Practice Assessment, Patient Voice and Patient Safety requirements as *requirements* for recertification. The ACR also continues to advocate for substantial reduction in redundant activities, and “busywork” that provides no meaningful learning or feedback to overly burdened physicians.

The ABIM Assessment 2020 report recommends that the ABIM focus its MOC efforts on assessing cognitive and technical skills relevant to the practice of internal medicine and the medical specialties. The report states other competencies -- such as communication, teamwork, empathy and quality improvement -- can better be assessed at the local level and in systems that can account for context. We believe this aligns well with the ACR position statement.

**We Need Your Participation:** It was evident from the discussion that moving forward with MOC reform is a work in progress and that the devil will be in the details. I urge you to participate in the process by taking action today:

- Register to participate in an ABIM lead MOC [focus group](#) at #ACR15.
- [Reserve an appointment](#) or stop by booth #942 during #ACR15 to meet informally with an ABIM representative.
- Submit your comments via email to ABIM at [assessment2020@abim.org](mailto:assessment2020@abim.org) or to ACR at [MOC@rheumatology.org](mailto:MOC@rheumatology.org)
- Subscribe to the [Transforming ABIM blog](#) for regular updates and additional opportunities to provide input.

The ACR leadership remains committed to working with you and the ABIM to help expedite evolution.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,



E. William St. Clair  
ACR President