

From the ABNM: Updates on MOC Part 3

Leonie Gordon, MD, Associate Executive Director, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Most physicians support lifelong learning and have willingly participated in “old fashioned” continuing medical education for many years. Educators believe that adult learners retain new information through continuous learning and assessment. Physicians have a robust medical knowledge that provides a strong foundation for acquiring new knowledge, and this is reinforced by continuously assessing that knowledge. Gaps should be recognized and corrected as part of demonstrating continuous proficiency. Although some members of the medical community believe that it is reasonable to ask physicians to formally document their knowledge every 10 years, others prefer longitudinal continuous learning with assessment. When in need of new information, many physicians turn to online resources to search for the appropriate item and then use clinical reasoning skills to deduce the ways in which that knowledge should be used. In 2016, the American Board of Anesthesia introduced the MOCA Minute pilot, an online process that allowed diplomates to assess knowledge, identify and fill gaps, and demonstrate proficiency continuously throughout each 10-year maintenance of certification (MOC) cycle. It was piloted for selected diplomates but was so well accepted that the American Board of Medical Specialties decided to launch a similar program as a pilot for interested member boards.

Much time has been spent planning the MOC assessment pilot, and it will be delivered through the CertLink Assessment Platform. The American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) CertLink MOC Assessment Pilot will use a longitudinal assessment model, with more frequent assessments of knowledge and judgment. This method could help diplomates identify knowledge gaps for further study. It is hoped that by giving shorter assessments of specific content over time, knowledge will be reinforced and retained. A dashboard will be created for each enrolled diplomate showing the number of questions answered and the percentage of questions answered correctly. Questions marked as highly relevant to practice but answered correctly with a low degree of confidence will be repeated to reinforce knowledge. Incorrectly answered questions will be given again in the same quarter on the same topic for continuous reassessment.

The results of this pilot will help determine whether this assessment format can be an alternative to the current secure MOC examination taken once every 10 years and whether it is well accepted and preferred by diplomates. Questions will address general topics and new knowledge areas that must be learned quickly. Diplomates in the pilot will have access to critiques and available educational material for each question answered.

The ABNM CertLink pilot is targeted for launch by early 2018 and will continue for 5 years, during which time the process and platform will be continually evaluated. Diplomates will be able to access questions in several ways; for example, through an e-mail reminder once an account has been set up or a mobile app that is being developed. During the pilot, participants will be regularly surveyed to capture feedback and suggestions for improvement. The results of the pilot and surveys will be analyzed to determine whether this new assessment is reliable and valid. Participation in the pilot will be entirely voluntary. Participants will receive a designated number of questions per quarter, with a specified amount of time to answer each. Once an answer is submitted, the diplomate will receive immediate feedback with the correct answer, a short narrative about the topic, and references. All categories tested will have equal numbers of questions. Participants will be required to answer or attempt to answer each item every quarter. If a diplomate chooses not to participate, the secure MOC exam will be available.

Participants are expected to commit for the duration of the pilot and provide feedback to the ABNM on the initiative. Information about Certlink has previously been published in Newsline (*J Nucl Med.* 2017;58[3]:9N). ABNM hopes that the pilot will allow its certified physicians to have a voice and active role in creating the next generation of MOC assessment. ABNM recognizes that it must be relevant to day-to-day practice in nuclear medicine and believes that data derived from the MOC part 3 pilot project will provide a more valid and timely evaluation of each diplomate’s knowledge and ability than that derived from the current MOC secure exam.

ABNM will continue to update all diplomates on this new part 3 MOC Certlink program. The nuclear medicine field is exciting, with new therapies and PET agents being developed and approved for clinical use. Patients should derive significant benefit from these innovations. ABNM is also playing its part by constantly looking for improved ways to test nuclear medicine physicians’ knowledge and ensure that we serve the public and help nuclear medicine physicians achieve their potential as providers of quality health care.



Leonie Gordon, MD