

## **NCDR<sup>®</sup> Information Sheet on Physician Self-Assessment of Practice Performance for Board Re-Certification**

Many physicians who practice in the U.S. are certified by a medical specialty board recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialists (ABMS). Cardiologists who are board certified are considered Diplomates of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), which is recognized by the ABMS. ABIM offers board certifications or additional qualifications in 19 clinical areas.

Cardiologists are certified by the ABIM in internal medicine and/or cardiovascular disease, and may have additional qualifications in interventional cardiology and/or clinical cardiac electrophysiology. The ABIM began issuing time-limited certificates in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease in 1990. The ABIM also offers additional qualifications in interventional cardiology (IV), which began in 1999 and clinical cardiac electrophysiology (EP), which began in 1992. Cardiologists with an IV and/or EP certification must also maintain certification in cardiovascular disease. All IV or EP certifications are time-limited; however, some physicians with the IV and/or EP certification(s) may have a cardiovascular disease certification without a time limitation. Physicians with a time-limited certification must complete a Maintenance of Certification (MOC) process to renew their certification. Physicians have 10 years to complete the ABIM MOC process for each certification.

The ABIM MOC requires physicians to maintain a valid practice license, re-take the certification exam, and earn a total of 100 points toward self-evaluation in medical knowledge and practice performance within the 10-year period. After a physician is recertified, a new MOC process cycle begins. Diplomates work to accumulate their 100 MOC points over the 10-year period. Additional points over 100 earned during one 10-year cycle may not be carried over to the next MOC cycle.

A minimum of 20 points must be earned in medical knowledge, and a minimum of 20 points must be earned in practice performance. The remaining 60 points can be earned through either medical knowledge or practice performance, or a combination of the two areas. The practice performance component is commonly referred to as MOC Part IV.

ABIM offers a number of web-based tools to complete the practice performance requirement called ABIM Practice Improvement Modules, or PIMs. The self-directed PIM allows physicians to use approved data sources to complete the module. National Cardiovascular Data Registry (NCDR) is an approved data source for completing the self-directed PIM for physicians whose patient records are submitted to the NCDR registries.

In addition to completing PIMs, ABIM has approved some societies' Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Programs that ABIM Diplomates may use to meet their ABIM MOC Part IV point requirements. For example, the ACC D2B Alliance (door-to-balloon) initiative has been approved by ABIM for 20 points toward self-evaluation of practice performance. Physicians who have participated in the D2B Alliance must submit a report to ABIM through their individual ABIM Website login home page. The report will be reviewed and, if approved, the physician will be granted 20 points of MOC credit for completing the CQI program. Physicians have until December 31, 2009, to submit the report to ABIM, regardless of when the physician's certification(s) expire.

The role of ABMS is to ensure consistency among board certifications for medical specialties in the U.S., and requires all member boards to now issue time-limited certifications and provide a similar MOC process. Physicians who have time-limited certifications in other medical specialties, such as emergency medicine, family practice, neurology, vascular medicine, surgery, and osteopathic medicine, and who have patient records submitted to one or more of the NCDR registries, should contact their respective boards regarding if and how NCDR data can be used to meet their specialty board's MOC process.

In addition to the above information, a list of frequently asked questions is provided on the following pages to help explain how to use NCDR registry data to meet ABIM MOC requirements.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Physician Self-Assessment of Practice Performance for Board Re-Certification and NCDR<sup>®</sup> Registries**

**Q. Do all medical boards have Maintenance of Certification programs?**

**A.** Yes. All boards that certify physicians to practice in the U.S. that are members of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) are required to have Maintenance of Certification (MOC) programs in place for time-limited certifications. Cardiologists are certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM).

**Q. Do all ABIM certified physicians have time-limited certifications?**

**A.** No. The ABIM began issuing time-limited certificates in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease in 1990. All cardiologists with additional qualifications in interventional cardiology (IV) and/or clinical cardiac electrophysiology (EP) have time-limited certifications in those additional qualifications. Physicians with EP and/or IV certifications must maintain certification in cardiovascular disease; however, the cardiovascular disease certification may not have a time-limitation.

**Q. How long is an ABIM time-limited certification valid?**

**A.** 10 years.

**Q. What are physicians with ABIM time-limited certifications required to do to renew their certification?**

**A.** Physicians with any ABIM time-limited certification(s) must complete a MOC process to renew their certification. The ABIM MOC requires physicians to maintain a valid practice license, re-take the certification exam, and earn a total of 100 points toward self-evaluation in medical knowledge and practice performance within the 10-year period. After a physician is recertified, a new MOC process cycle begins.

**Q. Can a physician earn all 100 points through self-evaluation of practice performance?**

**A.** No. A physician must earn a minimum of 20 points through self-evaluation of practice performance but can apply a maximum of 80 points earned through self-evaluation of practice performance toward the MOC requirements.

**Q. How does a physician earn points toward self-evaluation of practice performance?**

**A.** The ABIM has developed a number of online tools called Practice Improvement Modules, or PIMs, that physicians can complete to earn points toward MOC. In addition, ABIM has approved the ACC D2B Alliance (door-to-balloon) initiative for 20 points toward self-evaluation of practice performance. Physicians who have participated in the D2B Alliance must submit a report to ABIM through their individual ABIM Website login homepage by December 31, 2009, regardless of when their board certification expires. This report will be reviewed and, if approved, the physician will be granted 20 points of MOC credit for completing the MOC program.

**Q. When should a physician start the practice improvement portion of the MOC process?**

**A.** Physicians are recommended to commence this part of the MOC process at least 5 years prior to the expiration of their time-limited certificate. The process requires data retrieval, data review to identify performance gaps, creation of action plans for performance improvement, implementation of those action plans, and review and assessment of results. Results should demonstrate a performance improvement and need then be reported to ABIM for approval.

**Q. Can the same self-evaluation of practice performance activity count toward more than one ABIM certification?**

**A.** Yes, if the certifications overlap and the points were earned during the time period when the certifications overlap.

**Q. Can NCDR data be used to complete an ABIM PIM?**

**A.** Yes. The ABIM created a self-directed PIM that allows physicians to use approved data sources to complete the self-assessment of practice performance. The NCDR is one of the ABIM approved data sources.

**Q. Can any physician use NCDR data to complete the ABIM self-directed PIM?**

**A.** No. Only physicians whose patient records are being submitted to NCDR can use data from their hospital or practice to complete the ABIM self-directed PIM.

**Q. Does a physician have to use his/her individual patient records from NCDR to complete the self-directed PIM?**

**A.** No. A physician can use aggregate hospital or group data from NCDR to complete his/her self-directed PIM. A physician can, however, work with a hospital's or practice's Registry Site Manager to create a custom export of his/her own patient records to complete the self-directed PIM, if so desired.

**Q. Can a physician use an NCDR registry's Institutional Outcomes Report to complete the self-directed PIM?**

**A.** Yes. A physician can request a copy of an NCDR registry's Institutional Outcomes Report from the hospital's or practice's Registry Site Manager, and can use the hospital's or practice's aggregate report if it includes his/her patient records.

**Q. Are there other NCDR data options a physician can use from an NCDR registry?**

**A.** Yes. A physician can work with his/her hospital's or practice's Registry Site Manager to create custom exports at the group or physician level from their NCDR-certified data collection tool to use with the self-directed PIM.

**Q. If a physician uses one NCDR registry to complete a self-directed PIM and wants to complete the self-directed PIM again, is the physician required to use the same NCDR registry?**

**A.** No. Physicians who have patient records submitted to more than one NCDR registry can use each of those registries to complete a self-directed PIM.

**Q. Can physicians other than cardiologists use NCDR data for meeting MOC Part IV requirements?**

**A.** Yes, depending on the physician's certification. Physicians certified by ABIM in internal medicine who participate in the IC<sup>3</sup> Program<sup>®</sup>, for example, can use that data to complete the self-directed PIM. Physicians certified by medical specialty boards other than ABIM, and who have patient records submitted to NCDR for one or more registries, should consult their individual board to see if and how NCDR data can be used to meet MOC requirements.

**Q. Where can I find more information about board certification and MOC requirements?**

**A.** There are several resources for more information:

American College of Cardiology  
Heart House  
2400 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
Phone: 1-800-253-4636 or 202-375-6000  
Fax: 202-375-7000  
Website: [www.cardiosource.com/moc](http://www.cardiosource.com/moc)

American Board of Internal Medicine  
510 Walnut Street, Suite 1700  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3699  
Phone: 1-800-441-2246 or 215-446-3500  
Fax: 215-446-3590  
Website: [www.abim.org](http://www.abim.org)

American Board of Emergency Medicine  
3000 Coolidge Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
Phone: 517-332-4800  
Fax: 517-332-2234  
Website: [www.abem.org](http://www.abem.org)

American Board of Family Physicians  
2228 Young Drive  
Lexington, KY 40505-4294  
Phone: 1-888-995-5700 or 859-269-5626  
Fax: 859-335-7501 or 859-335-7509  
Email: [help@theabfp.org](mailto:help@theabfp.org)  
Website: [www.abfp.org](http://www.abfp.org)

American Board of Neurological Surgery  
6550 Fannin Street, Suite 2139  
Houston, TX 77030  
Phone: 713-441-6015  
Fax: 713-794-0207  
Website: **www.abns.org**

American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology  
2150 E. Lake Cook Road, Suite 900  
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089  
Phone: 847-229-6500  
Fax: 847-229-6600  
Website: **www.abpn.com**

American Board of Radiology  
5441 East Williams Blvd., Ste. 200  
Tucson, AZ 85711  
Phone: 520-790-2900  
Fax: 520-790-3200  
Website: **www.theabr.org**

American Board of Surgery  
1617 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 860  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Phone: 215-568-4000  
Fax: 215-563-5718  
Website: **www.absurgery.org**

American Board of Medical Specialties  
1007 Church Street, Suite 404  
Evanston, IL 60201-5913  
Phone: 847-491-9091  
Website: **www.abms.org**

Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists,  
and Boards of Certification  
142 E. Ontario St.  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: 800-621-1773 ext. 8266

American Osteopathic Board of Emergency  
Medicine  
142 E. Ontario Street, 8th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60611  
Phone: 312-335-1065

American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians  
330 E. Algonquin Road, Ste. 6  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005  
Phone: 847-640-8477

American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine  
1111 W 17th Street  
Tulsa, OK 74107-1898  
Phone: 918-561-1267

American Osteopathic Board of Neurology &  
Psychiatry  
2730 S. Val Vista Drive, #146  
Gilbert, AZ 85296  
Phone: 480-650-3206  
E-mail: aobnp@att.net

American Osteopathic Board of Radiology  
119 E. 2nd Street  
Milan, MO 63556  
Phone: 660-265-4011

American Osteopathic Board of Surgery  
4764 Fishburg Rd., Ste. F  
Huber Heights, OH 45424  
Phone: 800-782-5355



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