

August 18, 2017

Lois M. Nora, MD, JD, MBA  
American Board of Medical Specialties  
353 North Clark Street  
Suite 1400  
Chicago, IL 60654

Dear Dr. Nora,

We know that maintenance of certification (MOC) has been a contentious issue between physicians and certifying boards for a host of reasons. Many physicians have looked to their national specialty and state medical societies to provide leadership in addressing these concerns. This letter is to inform you of two meetings—a high-level summit that recently took place to discuss these problems, and a meeting this December with the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), and state medical societies to directly share our views and seek agreement on how to reshape the MOC process to the betterment of our physicians and the patients in their care.

On Wednesday, July 26, 2017 a small group of national medical specialty society and state medical society CEOs gathered to follow up on Maintenance of Certification, MOC, discussions that occurred during the June AMA meeting. The crisis impacting MOC had been discussed separately during the Specialty Society CEO Coalition (S2C2), the State CEO meeting, and during AMA's Annual CEO meeting where MOC was not on the agenda but quickly became the dominant topic. The leaders who gathered in Minneapolis, like you, recognize that issues with MOC programs have created an unintended threat to quality patient care. As physicians, we want patients to receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, by well-trained physicians. Recognizing that this goal is shared by certifying boards, our national medical specialty societies and our state medical societies are now sharing what we see as the issues and, potential unintended consequences of the current MOC program and an opportunity to collectively address these concerns.

Attached to this letter in Appendix A is a listing of the issues discussed. Appendix B is a current tabulation of state legislative activities, successful and pending, which threaten our right to professional self-regulation. As delineated in these issues, professional self-regulation is under attack. Concerns regarding the usefulness of the high-stakes exam, the exorbitant costs of the MOC process, and the lack of transparent communication from the certifying boards have led to damaging the MOC brand, and creating state-based attacks on the MOC process.

The July 26 discussion was very encouraging. While the problems are clear, there are opportunities to redirect the process. After all, this is about physician self-regulation and not MOC. This is about keeping patients first and doing all we can to ensure high quality patient care. Some boards have already recognized the problems and are responding. Together, we must fix the problem both in the short term and long term. If action is taken, we believe the state medical society legislative solution agenda may be mollified. There was unanimity amongst the national medical specialty society and state medical society leaders in wanting to work with the leaders of our certifying boards to ensure physician self-regulation.

We, the undersigned, propose a meeting of the leadership of the certifying boards, medical specialty societies, and state medical societies to discuss this crisis and plan a solution. Working together, we must create a long-term solution ensuring our professionalism and professional self-regulation. In the short term, we hope all boards will respond in a way that provides a window of opportunity. Clearly, we must show our respect for the public trust we are granted and ensure a process to maintain well-trained, highly qualified physicians. Lifelong learning and periodic assessment are valued vehicles in this process.

We propose a meeting on December 4, 2017, preceding the ABMS and CMSS dyad meeting scheduled in Chicago on December 5, 2017. This meeting will include leadership from all ABMS certifying boards, national medical specialty societies, and state medical societies. We firmly believe this is our profession's crisis and can only be solved collaboratively.

Lois, we look forward to hearing from you. We anticipate you will be sharing this letter with the CEO's of all Member Boards represented by ABMS. Please direct all responses to Hal C. Lawrence III, MD, ACOG Executive Vice President and CEO at [hlawrence@acog.org](mailto:hlawrence@acog.org) or 202-863-2500.

Respectively submitted,

State Medical Societies

Medical Association of Alabama  
Arizona Medical Association  
Arkansas Medical Society  
Connecticut State Medical Society  
Medical Society of Delaware  
Medical Society of District of Columbia  
Florida Medical Association  
Medical Association of Georgia  
Hawaii Medical Association  
Idaho Medical Association  
Indiana State Medical Association  
Iowa Medical Society  
Kansas Medical Society  
Kentucky Medical Association  
Louisiana State Medical Society  
Maine Medical Association  
Medchi (The Maryland State Medical Society)  
Massachusetts Medical Society  
Michigan State Medical Society  
Minnesota Medical Association  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
Missouri State Medical Association  
Montana Medical Association.  
Nevada State Medical Association  
New Hampshire Medical Society  
Medical Society of New Jersey  
New Mexico Medical Society  
Medical Society of the State of New York  
North Carolina Medical Society  
North Dakota Medical Association  
Ohio State Medical Association  
Oklahoma State Medical Association  
Pennsylvania Medical Society  
South Carolina Medical Association  
South Dakota State Medical Association  
Tennessee Medical Association  
Utah Medical Association  
Medical Society of Virginia

Washington State Medical Association  
West Virginia State Medical Association  
Wyoming Medical Society

National Medical Specialty Societies

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
American Academy of Dermatology  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Ophthalmology  
American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American College of Radiology  
American College of Rheumatology  
American College of Surgeons  
American Epilepsy Society  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Society of Anesthesiologists  
American Society of Clinical Oncology  
American Society of Hematology  
American Society of Nephrology  
American Society of Plastic Surgeons  
American Society for Reproductive Medicine  
American Urological Association  
College of American Pathologists  
Society of Gynecologic Oncology  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Society of Interventional Radiology  
Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging