

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 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