

The logo features the word "VISION" in a large, white, sans-serif font, with "for the" in a smaller, lowercase, white, sans-serif font centered below it. Below "for the" is the word "FUTURE" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a dark blue rectangular background.

## STAKEHOLDER BELIEFS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CONTINUING CERTIFICATION Survey Findings

To inform decisions about the future of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Member Boards' Maintenance of Certification (MOC) programs, the Continuing Board Certification: Vision for the Future (Vision Initiative) Commission conducted an online survey to elicit feedback from three key stakeholder groups: physicians, non-physician providers and other stakeholders involved in the delivery of health care, and the general public. The survey provided an open forum for input.

### SURVEY DESIGN - CONVENIENCE SAMPLE

The survey questions were developed by the Vision Initiative Planning Committee, which included representatives from ABMS, the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, Coalition for Physician Accountability, Council of Medical Specialty Societies, and Council on Medical Education of the American Medical Association, as well as public members. The survey included a combination of closed- and open-ended questions.

The survey was implemented using Survey Monkey, a popular online platform. Participants were invited to take the survey through a variety of means, which resulted in a convenience sample. The survey invitation was widely distributed to individuals and organizations who shared it with their staff and members. The organizations that helped promote the survey included the Council on Medical Specialty Societies, Specialty Society Chief Executive Officer Coalition, and the American Association of Medical Society Executives, individual associations and state medical societies. The Vision Initiative Commission appreciates the support of all the organizations who distributed the survey invitation.

In total, 36,392 people participated in the survey, including 34,616 physicians, 1,373 non-physician providers and stakeholders involved in the delivery of health care, and 403 members of the general public. The physician survey included responses from all 24 ABMS Member Boards and all 50 states.

**Important Note: While the survey includes more than 36,000 responses from across the three audiences, it used a convenience sample and is likely to reflect selection bias. However, the results are important for the Commission to consider and are consistent with previous feedback received by ABMS and its Member Boards.**

## SURVEY FINDINGS

### Physician Findings

When asked if they value MOC, one in 10 physicians (12%) said they value the program, nearly half (46%) said they have mixed feelings about it, while 41 percent said they do not value the program.

The survey asked physicians about their concerns regarding the MOC program. Participants were allowed to choose up to four options from a set list. The most frequently cited response was “costs” (58%). “Burdensome” was next highest (52%), followed by “does not accurately measure my ability as a clinician” (48%). “Does not help me improve my practice in a meaningful way” (43%) was the fourth most popular response.

Physicians were also asked to select which activities from a set list should be considered by the Vision Initiative Commission for continuing certification. The most popular responses were “continuing medical education” (84%) and “self-assessment questions delivered at regular intervals” (52%). Less popular choices were “open-book exam” (34%) and “assessment of the quality and safety of care provided” (24%), among the other choices.

Of the physician respondents, 96 percent are Board Certified. Additionally, 69 percent of respondents noted they are currently enrolled in a primary specialty MOC program, and 33 percent are currently enrolled in a subspecialty MOC program. Sixteen percent are lifetime certification holders. These categories are not mutually exclusive. Finally, six percent are not enrolled in an MOC program or are a lifetime certificate holder.

In summary, approximately half of physician respondents see MOC as too costly, burdensome, and not a true reflection of their abilities as clinicians. Some physicians want continuing certification to focus on practice-relevant continuing medical education (CME) opportunities, self-assessment, open-book exams, and quality of care assessments.

### Other Healthcare Stakeholders Findings

When asked how familiar they are with the requirements that physicians must fulfill to maintain their Board Certification, 39 percent of stakeholders said they were “very familiar,” 46 percent said they were “somewhat familiar,” nine percent said “somewhat unfamiliar,” and five percent said they were “not at all familiar” with the requirements.

When asked if they consider Board Certification when selecting a physician, more than half of the stakeholder respondents (57%) said they always consider it, more than a quarter (27%) said they sometimes consider it, and 15 percent said they never consider it. Next, when asked if Board Certified physicians provide higher-quality care than non-Board Certified physicians, nearly six in 10 respondents (59%) believe they do; one in five (22%) didn't know. One in five (19%) said Board Certified physicians don't provide higher-quality care.

### Consumer Findings

When asked if they consider Board Certification when selecting a physician, more than half of the general public respondents (56%) said they always consider it, more than a quarter (28%) said they sometimes consider it, and 16 percent said they never consider it. Next, when asked if Board Certified physicians provide higher-quality care than

non-Board Certified physicians, more than eight in 10 respondents (84%) believe they do; the remaining 16 percent said Board Certified physicians don't provide higher-quality care.

General public respondents were also asked about the activities physicians should be required to do to stay up to date and maintain clinical skills and expertise. The participants were given a set list and asked to select all the options that may apply. More than half of general public respondents selected the following options: "participate in a minimum number of CME hours each year" (85%), "periodic exercises to measure, and if necessary, improve quality of care" (74%), "periodically assess performance to compare with other doctors in the specialty" (64%), "have communication and clinical skills rated via patient surveys" (59%), "have performance rated via colleague surveys" (56%), and "take exam at regular intervals assessing clinical knowledge" (56%). The only activity not selected by more than half of the respondents was "self-assessment activities to determine how well he or she is doing" (48%). Two percent said, "none of the above."

## CONCLUSIONS

While these data must be interpreted with caution, the results provide important insights for the Vision Initiative Commission. The Commission will consider these results as part of their overall continuing certification testimony.

### Physicians

While a small percentage of physicians value MOC, a larger portion has either mixed views or do not value MOC. They currently see MOC as too costly and burdensome, not an accurate depiction of their abilities or relevant to their practice, and duplicative. However, physicians see some value in MOC for its CME opportunities and tracking, focus on lifelong learning, keeping physicians up to date, and self-assessment programs. Respondents want continuing certification to include a focus on relevant CME opportunities, self-assessment delivered at regular intervals, open-book testing, and an assessment of the quality and safety of the care provided.

### Other Health Care Providers and Consumers

Board Certification is a recognized credential and plays an important role in selecting a physician. In fact, both groups strongly indicated that Board Certification is important when selecting a physician and they believe Board Certified physicians provide a higher quality of care.

## ABOUT THE VISION INITIATIVE COMMISSION

As a collaborative process, the Commission brings together multiple partners to vision a system of continuing Board Certification that is meaningful, relevant and of value, while remaining responsive to the patients, hospitals, and others who expect that physicians are maintaining their knowledge and skills to provide quality specialty care.

The Commission framework began with a comprehensive assessment of the current continuing Board Certification system. The Commission holds hearings, provides information publicly, and tests and seeks feedback on concepts and ideas during the process. The Commission's final recommendations will be submitted to ABMS and its Member Boards for consideration and implementation in February 2019.