

The Year in Medicine 2016: News That Made a Difference

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Maintenance of Certification (MOC)

The controversial MOC program continued to make the news this year as changes were made at various levels. In March, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) said it has begun to study switching to an open-book exam for its MOC program.^[75] In April, Oklahoma became the first state to enact a law aiming to remove MOC as a requirement for physicians to obtain a license, get hired and paid, or secure hospital admitting privileges.^[76] By May, four states had enacted laws seeking to limit the use of MOC as a physician credential, and a similar measure has surfaced in another. State medical societies that operate under the umbrella of the AMA lobbied hard for the legislation. However, some of the credit for the anti-MOC legislation goes to the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, a splinter group that views itself as the anti-AMA.^[77] Also in May, the ABIM announced that it will allow its diplomates to test out of a high-stakes exam every 10 years for MOC by passing more frequent, but shorter, online exams beginning in 2018.^[78] That same month, the American Board of Radiology (ABR) also announced that it plans to eliminate the requirement that radiologists take an examination every 10 years in order to maintain their board certification. In the second half of 2018, the ABR will pilot a continuous testing approach that could replace the 10-year exam, and if all goes well, the new system will be rolled out to all ABR diplomates "as early as mid-2019," the board said.^[79]

For diplomates of the American Board of Obstetricians and Gynecology, the MOC exam will likely become optional for most of those licensed in the specialty, according to the board's incoming executive director. Under a 2-year pilot program, the group proposes an assessment three times a year for 6 years instead of an assessment done in year 6.^[80]

At the American Academy of Family Physicians 2016 Congress of Delegates in September, the majority of delegates chose not to demand the end of the mandatory MOC exam conducted every 10 years by the American Board of Family Medicine.^[81] From: http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/year-in-medicine2016?src=wnl_specrep_161207_mscpedit&uac=154608FR&implID=1248417&faf=1#page=15

