Know the Facts on AAN’s Role in MOC

What is the AAN’s role in the ABPN’s MOC program?
The AAN is committed to developing resources for our members to meet credentialing and regulatory requirements of any organization or entity they choose or are required to participate, such as certification, MOC, and state licensure. We prepare members for every stage of their career.

It is important to remember the AAN is NOT a certifying board. We are an independent organization committed to the needs of 29,000 members. We have no control over certification requirements established by any external board, such as the ABMS, ABPN, United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties, and other certifying boards. Rather, the AAN provides its members with the tools they need to meet all of their lifelong learning needs.

Does the AAN make money from MOC?
No, the AAN does not profit from MOC. The AAN has invested approximately $3 million developing resources to help members meet their MOC requirements. In fact, the AAN now offers our online resources to help meet MOC requirements FREE with membership.

Who requires Maintenance of Certification?
Maintenance of Certification (MOC) is a requirement of the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the ABPN. These organizations state the purpose is “to ensure that physician specialists offer quality patient care through an ongoing process of self-improvement and performance improvement.” MOC is required in all specialties—not just neurology. The American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) is the certifying board for neurology and reports to the ABMS.

MOC is not an American Academy of Neurology-mandated initiative and the AAN has no control over MOC. It’s important to understand that the AAN provides its members with free access to resources to help meet MOC requirements.

What is the purpose of MOC?
According to the ABMS, the ABMS through the ABPN established the MOC program as a professional response to the need for public accountability and transparency. The ABMS and ABPN state that the program is designed to document physician competence and improve medical care.

The ABMS and ABPN state that their MOC program is recognized as an important quality marker by insurers, hospitals, and credentialing organizations, such as the ABPN. MOC is not a mandate of the AAN.

How does MOC affect neurologists?
Maintenance of Certification (MOC) will have some impact on all US and Canadian neurologists due to the ever-changing landscape of health care.

As of today, MOC has importance for all ABPN board-certified neurologists, but it will have more immediate impact on neurologists certified by the ABPN after October 1994, who are obligated every 10 years to meet or exceed the MOC requirements in order to maintain their ABPN-certified neurologist status.

Each 10-year MOC cycle culminates with the MOC cognitive examination. All certificates issued by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN) after October 1, 1994, are 10-year, time-limited certificates and expire on December 31, 10 years from the year of the examination. Diplomates who are not recertified before their certificates expire are no longer Board certified in that area.

What are the components of MOC?
Components of the ABPN MOC program can be found on the ABPN’s website at www.ABPN.com. MOC through the ABPN is an ongoing process through which a diplomate’s credentials, licensure, and professional standing are verified and his or her knowledge and practice performance are evaluated.
The ABPN MOC program is currently comprised of four components:
1. Professional Standing
2. Self-assessment and CME
3. Cognitive Expertise
4. Performance in Practice (PIP)

How can the AAN help with MOC?

Ever since the American Board Medical Specialties (ABMS) mandated MOC in 2007, the Academy has worked hard to keep our members informed about MOC and has provided resources to help our members prepare for regulatory requirements. And when we heard our members’ complaints about the financial cost of MOC, we made a number of these valuable education programs FREE to members to help them meet MOC requirements.

How can the AAN help with the cost of MOC?

Based on our members’ complaints, the AAN did raise the issue of the cost of MOC with the ABPN, which has now decided to offer payment plans for diplomates.

Does the AAN have a position or guidance on the National Board of Physicians and Surgeons?

While the AAN does not have an official position on the National Board of Physicians and Surgeons, there are key considerations every member should make when choosing any certifying board. These include:

- Does your employer require certification?
- Will your employer recognize the certification from the certifying board?
- Does your payer require certification?
- Will your payer recognize the certification from the certifying board?