

# ABIM Working to Improve Certification Process

BY MARY ELLEN SCHNEIDER

FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

TORONTO — The American Board of Internal Medicine is working to make maintenance of certification less redundant, more continuous, and possibly more transparent to the public.

Dr. Wendy S. Levinson, ABIM board chair, told internists at the annual meeting that she understands their frustration with having to report the same type of quality information in so many different ways to various bodies.

"We ourselves live in this world as members of the board who practice," she said. "There are so many requirements on doctors to tell someone how they're doing."

With that in mind, the ABIM and other medical specialty certification boards are working closely with state licensing

up-to-date on current techniques and research.

The question of how much information to make available to the public about certification is another area that the ABIM board is addressing. The American Board of Medical Specialties, the umbrella group for the 24 medical specialty boards, is encouraging all of

the boards to start publishing online information on whether physicians are

certified or recertified, not whether the physician is participating.

The ABIM isn't yet ready to make that change, Dr. Levinson said. Going forward, the key will be to make sure that any published information is "meaningful and relevant" for the public, while also being "fair and appropriate" for the physician community, she said. ■

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participating in MOC. Right now, the public can see only if a physician is cer-



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boards to see if maintenance of certification (MOC) can fulfill some of their reporting requirements.

In addition, the recently enacted health reform law, the Affordable Care Act, includes language about using MOC to satisfy the quality reporting requirements of Medicare's Physician Quality Reporting Initiative. But how that is going to be implemented is still unclear, Dr. Levinson said.

Ideally, officials at the ABIM would like to see MOC become part of a more seamless process, she said.

For example, physicians someday might be able to log in to the ABIM Web site to complete their MOC requirements, then with a few clicks, send that information along to their state licensing board and a health plan's pay-for-performance program, as well as to hospitals for credentialing.

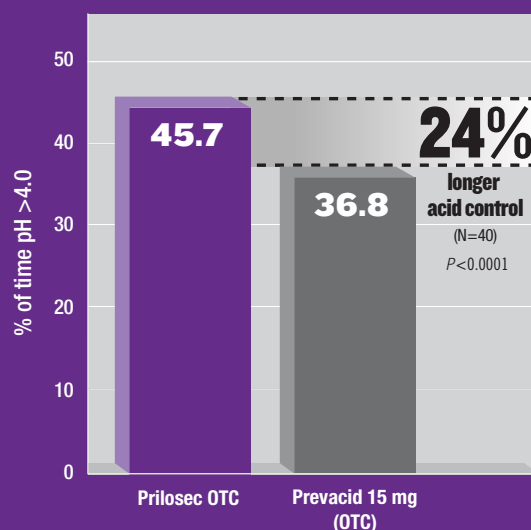
The ABIM also aims to transform MOC into a more continuous process so that physicians would be doing some aspect of MOC every 1-2 years. This wouldn't mean that physicians would have to take the secure exam more regularly, but they might need to fulfill other MOC requirements on a different schedule. "We know that a 10-year cycle is too long," Dr. Levinson said.

Other boards, such as the American Board of Emergency Medicine, already have annual requirements for their physicians. This type of schedule would help if MOC was to be used in the future to help maintain state medical licenses, she said, which need to be renewed every 1-2 years.

It would also help to meet the public's expectations that physicians are

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