



Policy on Required EMCC Activity

BACKGROUND

Emergency Medicine Continuous Certification (EMCC), an ABMS Maintenance of Certification (MOC)[®] program, represents a shift from evaluation of Emergency Medicine knowledge every ten years to continuous certification activity. ABEM wishes to state its policy regarding the required activity for diplomates to maintain certification.

POLICY

Diplomates of the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) can maintain certification beyond the expiration date of their current certificates by participating successfully in the Emergency Medicine Continuous Certification (EMCC) program according to the following requirements:

- Diplomates' medical licenses must continually comply with the ABEM Policy on Medical Licensure.
- Diplomates who wish to attempt to renew certification in the year their certificates expire must have completed at least eight appropriate Lifelong Learning and Self Assessment (LLSA) tests. Appropriate LLSA tests are those that are dated during the ten years covered by the diplomate's certificate.
 - During the first nine years of EMCC, a special condition of this policy is in effect in which the number of required LLSA tests is prorated. The following table shows how many LLSA tests a physician must complete in order to register for the ConCert examination in 2004 through 2013, the EMCC phase-in period.

Year in Which the Physician Wants to Take ConCert									
2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of LLSA Tests Required									
0	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

- Diplomates whose certificates expire after 2013 may take the ConCert examination early by completing one fewer LLSA test for each year early they take the ConCert examination. For example, a diplomate whose certificate expires in 2015 would need eight LLSA tests to take the ConCert examination in 2015, but would only need seven to take the ConCert examination in 2014.
- Through December 31, 2009, a ConCert examination that a diplomate took but did not pass counted as a physician's LLSA requirement for that year if the physician had not already taken and passed an LLSA test that same year.

- Diplomates must take and pass the ConCert examination in or before the year in which their certificates expire in order to maintain certification beyond the expiration date of their current certificate. Taking an examination is defined as completing 80% of the questions on the examination.
- Diplomates may take the ConCert examination in any year, provided that they have completed the number of LLSA tests required for a specific ConCert examination.
- If, for any reason, a diplomate does not take and pass the ConCert examination by the end of the year in which his or her certificate expires, the certificate will expire and the physician will become a former diplomate. ABEM cannot extend a certificate for any reason.
- If diplomates are ineligible to take the ConCert examination in the year their certificates expire because they did not complete enough LLSA tests, they have three options for renewing or regaining certification.
 1. If they complete their required LLSA tests by their certification expiration date, they will become former diplomates and may attempt to regain certification through the EMCC program. The Policy on Regaining Certification – Former Diplomates Who Did Not Miss Any Required LLSA Tests Prior to Their Certification Expiration Date describes the requirements of this option.
 2. If they miss one required LLSA test by their certification expiration date, they will become former diplomates and must take and pass the qualifying examination within three years of the date their certificates expires. The Policy on Regaining Certification – Former Diplomates Who Missed One Required LLSA Test Prior to Their Certification Expiration Date describes the requirements of this option.
 3. If they miss two or more required LLSA tests by their certification expiration date, they will become former diplomates and must take and pass the qualifying examination and the oral certification examination to regain certification. The Policy on Regaining Certification – Former Diplomates Who Missed Two or More Required LLSA Test Prior to Their Certification Expiration Date describes the requirements of this option.
- Diplomates who are ineligible to take the ConCert examination in the year their certificate expire or are ineligible to regain certification through the EMCC program because they did not and cannot complete the required number of LLSA tests may begin taking the necessary certification examination(s) before their certificate expires.
- Diplomates who can attest to participation in a national, regional, or local practice improvement program that meets ABEM APP requirements are designated as clinically active. Diplomates who do not complete a required APP attestation will be designated as clinically inactive. Diplomates can change their status from clinically inactive to clinically active by attesting to completion of one APP requirement.
- Clinically active diplomates will complete three APP activities during the ten years after certification to maintain their clinically active designation.
 1. One Patient Care Practice Improvement Activity in the first four years after certification;
 2. A second Patient Care Practice Improvement Activity in the following four years; and
 3. One Communication/Professionalism Activity in the first eight years after certification.

- An APP Patient Care practice improvement activity must include the following four steps:
 1. Review patient clinical care data from ten patients. The data must be related to a single presentation, disease, or clinical care process that is part of *The Model of the Clinical Practice of Emergency Medicine* (EM Model). Group data is acceptable if the individual diplomate's data is included. Patient data include any of the following:
 - ♦ Clinical care processes
 - ♦ Feedback from patients that relates to the clinical care given
 - ♦ Outcomes of clinical care
 - ♦ Access to care, e.g., time for through-put, left without being seen
 2. Compare the data to evidence-based guidelines. Only if such guidelines are not available, diplomates may use expert consensus or comparable peer data.
 3. Develop and implement a practice improvement plan which may be an individual or group effort. The practice improvement plan could include a change in a process, adding clinical reminders, personal education, etc.
 4. Review patient clinical care data from ten additional patients with the same presentation, disease, or clinical process as the first patient data review. Use this new data to evaluate whether clinical performance has positively changes or if acceptable performance is maintained.
- The Communication/Professionalism activity is designated to help assure that diplomates communicate with patients in an effective and professional manner. Other methods, such as interviews and focus groups, are acceptable. At least ten patients must be surveyed and a minimum of one physician behavior must be measured from each of the following three categories:
 1. Communications/listening, for example
 - ♦ Communicate clearly with patients and other medical staff by listening carefully and couching language at the appropriate level for the listener.
 2. Providing information, for example
 - ♦ Explain the clinical impression and anticipated management course to the patient and the patient's family.
 - ♦ Provide information about tests and procedures.
 - ♦ Give the patient options.
 3. Showing concern for the patient, for example
 - ♦ Show respect to the patient and other medical staff.
 - ♦ Make the patient feel comfortable by asking if they have any questions or concerns and act to address their concerns.
 - ♦ Ask the patient about adequate pain relief.
- Diplomates engaged in APP activities are required to specify an independent verifier of the diplomate's APP activities. The verifier must be someone with oversight or knowledge of practice performance, and would likely be one of the following:
 - Hospital board chair or other member of the board
 - Department chair
 - Chief of Staff
 - Medical director
 - Practice administrator in non-hospital settings
- Ten percent of diplomates submitting APP activity will be randomly selected for verification. Verifiers will be asked to affirm that all of ABEM's requirements are met.

- Diplomates may complete the Patient Safety Module of the Quality Improvement in Practice Program to fulfill a Patient Care Practice Improvement activity.

- Diplomates who are clinically inactive are not required to participate in APP.
 - Diplomates who are clinically inactive will be able to maintain ABEM certification. Because APP is designated for diplomates involved in patient care activities, clinically inactive diplomates are not required to participate in APP. ABEM records will indicate that the diplomate is clinically inactive, and this information will be reported and displayed to the public.

PROCEDURES

The deadline for determining eligibility to take the ConCert examination is one day before the end of the ConCert registration period for diplomates who are able to catch up on their LLSA test requirements.

APPEALS

The American Board of Emergency Medicine maintains an appeal process for diplomates and former diplomates who do not fulfill the requirements described in this policy.

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