



APPROVED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Program Guide

Effective Date: **APRIL 11, 2017**

Overview

Since its founding in 1936, certification by the [American Board of Internal Medicine](#) (ABIM) has stood for the highest standard in internal medicine and its 20 subspecialties and has meant that internists have demonstrated – to their peers and to the public – that they have the clinical judgment, skills, and attitudes essential for the delivery of excellent patient care. ABIM is not a membership society, but a non-profit, independent evaluation organization. Our accountability is both to the profession of medicine and to the public.

Maintenance of Certification (MOC) promotes lifelong learning and the enhancement of the clinical judgment and skills essential for high quality patient care. The Practice Assessment component of the ABIM MOC program supports physician engagement in systems-based practice and practice-based learning and improvement competencies and requires physicians to apply the principles of quality improvement (QI) to measure and improve care. The Patient Safety component of the ABIM MOC program gives physicians the opportunity to complete activities to advance local and national patient safety goals.

The ABIM Approved Quality Improvement (AQI) Program is the process through which ABIM recognizes externally developed QI and safety activities. The AQI Program allows ABIM Board Certified physicians to earn Practice Assessment MOC points and Patient Safety MOC credit for activities that meet the guidelines specified in this document.

ABIM welcomes proposals from sponsors that may include medical specialty societies, hospitals or departments within hospitals, medical groups, clinics, or other health related organizations that wish to approve a single activity (larger health care organizations seeking to pursue QI activities across disciplines may wish to pursue the [ABMS Multi-Specialty Portfolio Approval Program™](#)). Proposed activities should fit into one or more of the National Academy of Medicine’s (formerly the Institute of Medicine) quality dimensions or one or more of the three Aims or six Priorities articulated in the National Quality Strategy. As part of a process to evolve the AQI program to accept a wider variety of activities for MOC, sponsors will have the opportunity to co-create with ABIM the definition of meaningful engagement in quality improvement activities.

ABIM Approved Quality Improvement (AQI) Program Guidelines

Sponsors seeking to have QI and safety activities recognized for MOC must submit a proposal describing how the activity meets the following guidelines:

Quality and Safety Activity Guidelines

AQI1: The activity should address a quality or safety gap that is supported by a needs assessment or problem analysis, or must support the completion of such a needs assessment as part of the activity.

AQI2: The activity should address care, care processes, or systems of care in one or more of the National Academy of Medicine's (formerly the Institute of Medicine) [quality dimensions](#) or one or more of the [three Aims or six Priorities](#) articulated in the National Quality Strategy.

AQI3: The activity should have specific, measurable aim(s) for improvement.

AQI4: The activity should use measures appropriate to the aim(s) for improvement.

AQI5: The activity should include interventions intended to result in improvement.

AQI6: The activity should include appropriate data collection and analysis of performance data to assess the impact of the interventions.

Sponsor Guidelines

AQI7: Sponsors must be able to provide physician completion information to ABIM on behalf of physicians for the purposes of granting MOC credit.

Meaningful Physician Participation Guidelines

AQI8: The sponsor must define meaningful physician participation in their activity, and describe how they will identify physicians who meet their requirements. Physicians meeting sponsor requirements are likely to participate in one or more of the areas outlined in the above guidelines, but participation in every step of the quality improvement process is not an ABIM requirement.

Optional Patient Safety Activities

Sponsors seeking to have activities recognized for ABIM Patient Safety MOC credit in addition to Practice Assessment MOC points must describe how the activity meets the following ABIM Patient Safety requirements:

AQI9: The activity addresses at least one of the following topics:

- Foundational knowledge (must include *all* of the following):
 - Epidemiology of error: should prepare physicians to discuss the key definitions that underpin current patient safety efforts
 - Fundamentals of patient safety improvement (plan, do, study, act or PDSA): should engage physicians in a PDSA cycle focused on patient safety

- Culture of safety: should identify the specific elements, (i.e., the beliefs, attitudes and values about work and risks) that contribute to safety culture
- Prevention of adverse events (examples include, but are not limited to):
 - Medication safety (e.g., medication reconciliation, safe use of analgesics and sedatives, identification and remediation of polypharmacy in the elderly)
 - Prevention of healthcare acquired infections
 - Falls prevention
 - Teamwork and care coordination

ABIM Approved Quality Improvement (AQI) Program Policies

Continuing Medical Education (CME)

ABIM will not accept AQI applications for activities offering *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Accredited providers should register CME activities and submit participant completion information using ACCME's Program and Activity Reporting System (PARS). Visit [ACCME's website](#) for more information.

MOC Points

Activities recognized for MOC through the AQI Program will earn 20 Practice Assessment MOC points for ABIM Board Certified physicians.

Duration of MOC Recognition

There is no term limit for AQI activities. Sponsors will be required to periodically review and agree to the AQI program policies as they are updated by ABIM.

Activity Maintenance

Sponsors are expected to maintain the currency and relevance of the activity. ABIM reserves the right to periodically consider whether or not the activity supports current practice.

Participant Completion Information

The sponsor must have systems, resources and processes in place to:

- collect the participant completion information described in Table 1;
- obtain permission from the participant to share the completion information with ABIM; and
- transmit the completion information to ABIM on behalf of the participant.

Table 1: Participant Completion Information

Field Name	Description
ABIM ID	Every ABIM Board Certified physician has a unique, six-digit ABIM ID number.
First Name	Physician's first name
Last Name	Physician's last name

DOB	Physician's date of birth (mm/dd)
Activity Completion Date	Date (mm/dd/yyyy) the physician completed the activity
ABIM Activity ID	A unique alpha numeric value assigned by ABIM
MOC Points	Activities recognized for MOC through the AQI Program will earn 20 Practice Assessment MOC points for ABIM Board Certified physicians.
MOC Credit Type(s)	Indicate the credit type(s) for which the MOC points should be granted. Credit types include Practice Assessment and Patient Safety.

Participant completion information is governed by [ABIM's Confidentiality Policy](#). Identifiable patient data shall not be provided to ABIM by any organization or participant.

Participant Completion Data Reporting Timeframe

ABIM Board Certified physicians need to complete their MOC activities by December 31 in order for the MOC points to count toward any MOC requirements that are due by the end of the year. To that end, sponsors should report participant completion data by December 31 to ensure that the MOC points count towards this year's requirements. ABIM will accept prior year completion data reported through March 31 and any ABIM Board Certified physician who experienced a negative status change as a direct result of insufficient MOC points will have their status adjusted once the required number of points have been earned.

Program Fees/Participant Fees

ABIM will not charge a fee to sponsors to submit AQI proposals or participate in the program at this time. ABIM may revisit its fee structure in the future.

Sponsors are responsible for all costs associated with developing and operating the activity. ABIM has no policy that precludes the sponsor from charging a fee for participation in the activity; ABIM will not reimburse fees charged by the sponsor to participants.

Use of Participant Data

If participant data will be shared with the funder of the activity or any other commercial entities, whether individually or in aggregate, this must be disclosed to participants prior to the beginning of the activity. This transparency allows participants to decide if they wish to participate in activities that provide their data and/or data about their clinical practice to commercial entities.

Commercial Support

Activities that are funded using commercial support must comply with the [ACCME Standards for Commercial SupportSM](#). ABIM reserves the right to request an additional external review by an expert of ABIM's choice (at the Sponsor's expense) as part of the review process to assure that the activity presents a balanced approach.

Advertising and Promotional Material

In accordance with the [ACCME Standards for Commercial SupportSM](#), no third-party and/or proprietary advertising or promotional material can appear in or be part of the experience of the activity, including:

- Feedback reports showing physicians their performance on the survey cannot contain any advertising, corporate logo, trade name, or a product-group message of an [ACCME-defined commercial interest](#).
- Educational materials that are part of a CME activity in which physicians are required to participate as a condition of completing the survey activity, including slides, abstracts, and handouts, cannot contain any advertising, corporate logo, trade name, or a product-group message of an [ACCME-defined commercial interest](#).
- Disclosure of commercial support must never include the use of a trade name or a product-group message of an [ACCME-defined commercial interest](#).

Data Privacy and Security Compliance

Sponsors are responsible for ensuring that the appropriate data privacy and security safeguards are in place and conform to all relevant regulatory and industry requirements.

Public Information About Providers of MOC Activities

The following information is considered public information, and therefore may be released by ABIM:

- Sponsor name
- Activity title
- Activity description
- Contact name
- Contact email
- Activity URL (if applicable)
- Activity start date
- Activity end date
- Fee (Y/N)
- Registration (Open to all/Limited*)
- MOC point value and MOC credit type(s)
- Relevant Specialties

*"Limited" indicates that registration is not publically available and limited to, for example, a sponsor's members or employees only.

The following information will be made available in physicians' MOC activity reports located in the secure physician login area of ABIM's website:

- Activity title
- MOC point value and MOC credit type(s)
- Activity completion date

Communication of MOC Recognition

The MOC statement must appear on all MOC activity materials and brochures distributed by organizations, with the exception of initial, save-the-date type activity announcements. Such

announcements contain only general, preliminary information about the activity such as the date, location and title. If more specific information is included, such as faculty and objectives, the MOC statement must be included.

MOC Statement

“Successful completion of this activity enables the participant to earn 20 Practice Assessment points [and patient safety MOC credit] in the American Board of Internal Medicine’s (ABIM) Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. It is the sponsor’s responsibility to submit participant completion information to ABIM for the purpose of granting the MOC points.”

MOC Badge

ABIM will provide the Sponsor with the “Recognized for MOC Credit” badge for use in both print and web-based promotional materials. The badge may be used to promote ABIM’s acceptance of the activity for points in the MOC program.

