



## American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine Adopts New Maintenance of Certification Program (Phleb-MOC)

### Background

The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) has stated "... ultimately, the measure of physician specialists is not merely that they have been certified, but how well they keep current in their specialty." In 2000 the ABMS adopted the concept of Maintenance of Certification (MOC), which requires physicians to demonstrate their participation in lifelong learning and ongoing practice improvement, reflecting the belief that a continuous evaluation and learning process is in the best interest of patient care and of physicians wishing to maintain currency and competency in their field.

The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine (ABVLM) has been committed to MOC from its inception, with program development naturally following development of the certification process. Part of the original established [purpose of the ABVLM](#) included serving "the public and the medical profession by establishing initial and continuing qualifications for certification and maintenance of certification as physician specialists in the practice of phlebology." The guiding principle of MOC is to foster excellence in patient care. Through the MOC program, certified phlebologists will advance the standard of the specialty. Thus we are pleased to announce the Phleb-MOC program, which will commence in 2012. **The ABVLM is committed to making the program easy and simple to understand, track, and complete.**

### Phleb-MOC Program

The ABVLM recognizes the critical issues of quality of care and patient safety, and the increasing importance of attention to quality in terms of public perception, reimbursement and governmental regulation. The goal of the Phleb-MOC program is to assure continued competence of board-certified physician phlebologists. Therefore, all those who wish to maintain certification in phlebology must fulfill the requirements of Phleb-MOC's four components during the course of a 10-year cycle.

While some programs will be available through the ABVLM (the certification exam for example), other organizations (such as ACP, AVF, SIR, SVM and others) may choose to develop and present programs that meet the CME, self-assessment and evaluation of performance in practice components of the Phleb-MOC requirements. These organizations are distinct and separate organizations from ABVLM, each with their own governing boards, structure and bylaws. The ABVLM is committed to working with all interested organizations in developing these programs, which must be approved by ABVLM.

The Phleb-MOC program has four basic components, similar to requirements of [ABMS specialty boards](#). While we are following ABMS guidelines for MOC, the ABVLM board sets the specific requirements.

Phleb-MOC will require evidence of:

#### 1. Professional Standing

The diplomate will be required to list all medical licenses currently held and document a valid, full and unrestricted medical license corresponding to the state of his/her professional address.

#### 2. Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Periodic Self-Assessment

During the 10-year cycle the diplomate will be required to complete a minimum of 30 hours of CME every 3-year period (average of 10 hours per year). These CME hours should be from programs that are related to phlebology and that conform to the [ABVLM CME policy](#).

As part of the CME requirements, one must complete at least four hours of a qualifying self-assessment module by years 4 and 8 in the 10-year MOC cycle.

Note that this SAM requirement will be waived for diplomates that passed the exam in years 2008-2010. Also note that because the MOC program does not commence until 2012, the "10 hours per year" for CME achievement will be prorated according to the diplomate's MOC year. For example, a diplomate in MOC Year 2 is responsible for years 2 and 3, or 20 hours of the 30 hours of CME, whereas a diplomate in Year 4 is not responsible for MOC years 1-3, but is fully responsible for 30 hours of CME in MOC years 4-6.

#### 3. Cognitive Expertise

At the end of each 10-year Phleb-MOC cycle, a diplomate must successfully complete a recertification examination of cognitive expertise (the exam may be taken in year 9 or 10.) This secure, timed and proctored examination will cover the field of phlebology, including basic science, venous diseases and syndromes, diagnostic tools and screening, duplex ultrasound and other imaging modalities, treatment/therapy and professional standards.

4. Evaluation of Performance in Practice

This component is under development at the current time.

AMERICAN BOARD OF PHLEBOLOGY Phleb – MOC										
Year Exam Passed <sup>1</sup>	2011	2010	2009	2008						
MOC Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
COMPONENTS	REQUIREMENTS									
Part I	<b>Professional Standing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain unrestricted medical license throughout cycle</li> <li>Remit annual MOC fee (fee is waived in year initial exam taken and year of recertification exam, and for all in 2012)</li> <li>Update demographic and contact information as required</li> </ul>									
Part II	<b>Life Long Learning &amp; Self-Assessment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete 30 hours of <a href="#">Phlebology CME</a> credits every 3 years</li> <li>At least 4 hours of the CME in years 1-4 and 5-8 must be in a qualifying Self-Assessment module (SAM)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Year 1-4 SAM requirement is waived for diplomates who took their certifying exam in 2008-2010.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>									
Part III									<b>Cognitive Expertise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recertification Exam (Year 9 or 10)</li> </ul>	
Part IV	<b>Evaluation of Performance In Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently in development</li> </ul>									

**Notes to above table**

1. Diplomates who certified in 2008 are in MOC Year 4; 2009 are in MOC Year 3; 2010 are in MOC Year 2; and 2011 are in MOC Year 1

**2. Self-Assessment modules (SAMs):**

- ABMS [Patient Safety Courses](#).
- Approved SAMs offered at the ACP Annual Congress in November 2011 will count towards fulfilling the SAM requirements for Year 1-4 for diplomates certified in 2011, and for Year 5-8 for all other diplomates.
- Other programs are in development.

3. All SAM CME taken by diplomates who certified in 2008-2010 will count towards their year 5-8 SAM CME requirement

**Annual MOC Fees**

There will be an annual MOC fee to participate in the program. However, newly certified diplomates are exempt from the Annual MOC Fee the year of their certification, and there will be no annual MOC fee the year the recertification exam is taken (year 9 or 10). **Note that MOC fees will be waived for everyone in 2012**, and will be \$175 annually starting in 2013.

**Clinical Activity Status Policy**

The American Board of Venous & Lymphatic Medicine (ABVLM) recognizes that its Diplomates may change their practice status over time. The ABPh has defined clinical activity status, in keeping with recommendations made by the American Board of Medical Specialties. The status of each Diplomat will be public information. Diplomates who have successfully passed the ABVLM certification exam and who are actively practicing phlebology and participating in all parts of Maintenance of Certification (MOC) will have Certified, Active status. [Click here](#) to view the full policy.

**Final Thoughts**

All medical certifying boards have a common mission and purpose, to serve the public interest by promoting excellence in the practice of a given specialty. Certification of a physician specialist requires meeting licensing and training qualifications, documentation by testing that a physician has mastery of the basic knowledge and skills that define the area of medical specialization, and a commitment to lifelong learning and assessment. The Phleb-MOC program, envisioned at the inception of the ABVLM, will be an important part of meeting those requirements.