

BOARD NEWS

American Board of Family Medicine Diplomate Certification: Current Status and Beyond

The American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) is pleased to announce that as of December 31, 2006, more than 9000 of the Diplomates who certified or recertified in 2003 successfully met the deadline of completing their Stage One requirements for Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians (MC-FP). By completing these requirements, these Diplomates are eligible to remain on track for the 3-year extension of their current certificate, creating a 10-year certificate. The 2003 Diplomates are the first to complete Stage One and set an important precedent for the next several groups of Diplomates. The first 3-year stage of the MC-FP process includes completing either 3 Part II modules (SAMs) or 2 Part II modules and 1 Part IV module (PPM or approved alternate).

Stage Two requirements, which the 2003 cohort must complete by December 31, 2009, include 2 Part II modules (SAMs) and 1 Part IV module (PPM or approved alternate). After successfully completing these requirements, Diplomates will earn the 3-year extension to their 7-year certificate. These requirements may be completed anytime before the deadline; however, the 10-year certificate will not be mailed to the Diplomates until the end of Stage Two (December 31, 2009). For those Diplomates who have completed their Stage Two requirements, the ABFM Web site will immediately indicate the 3-year extension on their certificate upon completion.

The Diplomates who certified or recertified in 2004, and who began MC-FP in 2005, must complete their Stage One requirements by December 31, 2007. To date, more than 7500 of the 2004 cohort have completed at least one SAM. As with the 2003 cohort, the Stage One requirements are the same: either 3 Part II modules (SAMs) or 2 Part II modules and 1 Part IV module (PPM or approved alternate).

Diplomates who certified or recertified in 2005 have until December 31, 2008, to complete Stage One requirements. For this and all subsequent

groups of Diplomates, Stage One consists of 2 Part II modules (SAMs) and 1 Part IV module (PPM or approved alternate).

Diplomates who certified or recertified in 2006 may now begin working on the MC-FP modules at their convenience. Stage One requirements (2 Part II modules and 1 Part IV module) are due by December 31, 2009.

To help all Diplomates keep track of their progress in MC-FP, the ABFM has updated its Web site to reflect the 7-year or 10-year track chosen by the Diplomate. We encourage all Diplomates to visit the ABFM Web site (www.theabfm.org) and log in to the Physician Portfolio section.

The ABFM has continuously worked to improve the MC-FP process to better serve and communicate with the Diplomates. As part of this process, the ABFM has collaborated with many key organizations to improve all areas of satisfying requirements for relicensure, credentialing, practice reporting requirements demanded by payors, and pay for performance initiatives. As a result of one of these endeavors, the ABFM will begin publicly reporting MC-FP status on the Web site as part of the Diplomate certification status. This information will begin appearing on the Web site in 2007. The Joint Committee for the Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO) recently revised regulations after endorsing and now adopting the same 6 general competencies that the ABFM uses for the assessment of Diplomates who participate in MC-FP. The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) is working closely with the JCAHO to develop a mechanism by which hospital credentialing agencies can verify the Maintenance of Certification status of physicians who apply for privileges within their hospitals. This will require modifications to the current verification process on the ABMS Web site and also will necessitate that individual specialty boards report the status of their Diplomates in the Maintenance of Certification process.