



Maintenance of Licensure: Fast Facts



What is Maintenance of Licensure?

Maintenance of Licensure (MOL) is a system of continuous professional development for physicians that supports, as a condition for license renewal, a physician's commitment to lifelong learning that is relevant to their area of practice and contributes to improved health care. The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), the non-profit organization which represents the nation's 70 state medical boards, is working with its member boards to develop a MOL system that is reasonable, logical and administratively feasible.

In 2004, the FSMB's House of Delegates adopted a policy statement that "State medical boards have a responsibility to the public to ensure the ongoing competence of physicians seeking licensure." After seven years of careful study, which included input and guidance from physicians and health care organizations across the house of medicine, a framework for MOL was formally adopted by the FSMB's House of Delegates in 2010.

While MOL is still several years away from being adopted by any state medical board, the FSMB is currently working to develop and implement various pilot projects to help states prepare for MOL and to determine best practices.

What is the rationale for MOL?

State medical boards and the medical profession as a whole are facing increasing demand from the public and health policy makers for greater accountability and transparency.

- As medicine has become more complex and fast-evolving, the need for lifelong learning and skills maintenance has increased.
- This is part of a larger movement in the United States and internationally to improve health care quality, decrease medical errors and improve patient safety.
- The public has increased its focus and scrutiny on quality and safety issues in health care; consumers have become more empowered and seek greater accountability and transparency in the health care system.

What are the core components of MOL?

The framework for MOL, adopted by the FSMB's House of Delegates in 2010, recommends that state medical boards require physicians to periodically demonstrate participation in three components of effective lifelong learning in medicine:

1. **Reflective Self-Assessment** (*What improvements can I make?*): Physicians must participate in an ongoing process of reflective self-evaluation, self-assessment and practice assessment, with subsequent successful completion of appropriate educational or improvement activities.
2. **Assessment of Knowledge and Skills** (*What do I need to know and be able to do?*): Physicians must demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to provide safe, effective patient care within the framework of the six general competencies as they apply to their individual practice.
3. **Performance in Practice** (*How am I doing?*): Physicians must demonstrate accountability for performance in their practice using a variety of methods that incorporate reference data to assess their performance in practice and guide improvement.

Would MOL require a mandatory, high-stakes examination?

No. The MOL framework proposed by the FSMB would not require physicians to take examinations in order to comply with MOL. It may be an option physicians wish to utilize to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in their area of practice, but the FSMB does not believe a high-stakes exam should be mandatory.

What is the relationship between MOL, Maintenance of Certification (MOC) and Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC)?

MOL, MOC and OCC all value the concept of lifelong learning and continued professional development. MOL is not the same as Maintenance of Certification, which is produced by the American Board of Medical Specialties, or Osteopathic Continuous Certification, which is produced by the American Osteopathic Association Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists. State medical boards do not require specialty certification or recertification (i.e., MOC or OCC) for licensure or licensure renewal, and that is not expected to change.

Though MOC or OCC are not required by state medical boards for licensure, the FSMB's proposed MOL system recommends that state medical boards recognize physicians actively engaged in MOC or OCC in their area of practice as being in substantial compliance with MOL.

For physicians who were never specialty certified, or who are not participating in MOC or OCC, the FSMB will help state medical boards identify activities that physicians already engage in, such as accredited CME (including Performance Improvement CME), that could help them comply with MOL's three components.

How can I learn more about Maintenance of Licensure?

For more information about the FSMB's MOL initiative, please visit www.fsmb.org/mol.html.

About the FSMB

The FSMB is a national non-profit organization representing all 70 state and territorial medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, physician assistants and other health care professionals. It assists these state and territorial medical boards as they go about their mandate of protecting the public's health, safety and welfare. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation.