

A Roadmap to Maintenance of Certification for Family Physicians



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THE MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION PROGRAM for Family Physicians (MC-FP), a mechanism for Board recertification for practicing family physicians, is now in its fourth year. Prior to 2003, recertification required possession of a full and unrestricted license, completion of 300 CME credits, and successful completion of a cognitive examination. Now, beginning with the 2003 recertification class, MC-FP will also require participation on an ongoing basis between examinations. The major objective of MC-FP is to provide opportunities for prospective professional development. CAFP will do its best to help members navigate the MC-FP process, but the best source for clarification and the latest updates is the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM). This pull-out guide is based on information for 2006 class members and beyond. Don't have time to read this now? Aren't recertifying this year? Tear out this quick reference guide and file it somewhere for future use.



MAJOR ATTRACTIONS: FOUR COMPONENTS

The MC-FP process is divided into four components that provide evidence of professional standing, lifelong learning, cognitive expertise, and performance in practice. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are the same as the previous recertification process.

PROFESSIONALISM:

This is a measure of your professional standing. It includes information provided by both patients and other physicians, and requires:

- Possession of a valid and unrestricted license in all states in which you maintain a license.*
- Peer review, via a process completed by phone or over the Internet, and introduced by ABFM and the American Board of Medical Specialties in 2005. This review will be required once during the seven- or 10-year cycle.
- Demonstration of patient satisfaction will also be required once during the cycle.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AND LIFELONG LEARNING:

This section focuses on specific areas of knowledge of your choice. The purpose is to enhance your knowledge and skills in areas that are of greatest use in your individual practice. Completion requires:

- 300 CME credits.*
- One Self-Assessment Module per year, for a total of six. These modules are accessed over the Internet, and consist of two parts: 1) assessing cognitive knowledge with respect to a particular disease or problem, and 2) assessing your ability to apply that knowledge using patient simulation technology developed by the ABFM. Diplomates may choose up to two modules from providers other than the ABFM, and the modules will also count toward your CME requirement.

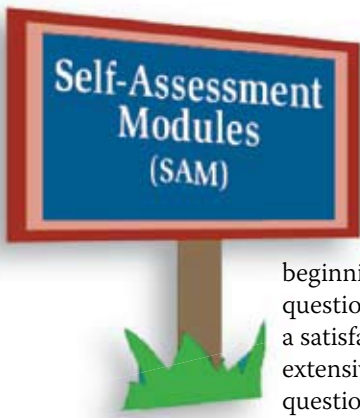
COGNITIVE EXPERTISE:

Successful completion of the ABFM examination is still required.*

PERFORMANCE IN PRACTICE:

A Performance in Practice Module (PPM) must be completed once during the seven- or 10-year cycle. Instead of focusing on recordkeeping (as past requirements may have), the PPM focuses on quality of care. PPM also contributes to the CME requirement. CAFP's New Directions in Diabetes Care Collaboratory is being reviewed for PPM approval and credit.

DETOUR: THE



Once in the MC-FP program you are required to complete six SAMs and one Performance in Practice module during the cycle. Each SAM consists of a 60-question knowledge assessment and a simulated clinical encounter. You must complete the 60-question knowledge assessment with a satisfactory score before beginning the simulated clinical encounter. The 60-question knowledge assessment can be repeated until a satisfactory score is achieved. SAMs also include extensive references you can use to discuss and answer questions.

The current SAMs are:

- Asthma
- Depression
- Heart Failure
- Coronary Artery Disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension

**Toll Booths:
Payment Options for the 2004, 2005, or 2006 Classes**

In an effort to provide the greatest flexibility for paying for MC-FP, the ABFM has designed three payment plans. The following plans are available to those who entered MC-FP in 2004, 2005, or 2006:

PLAN I: This single payment plan allows you to make one payment for the total cost of MC-FP. It includes six SAMs, one PPM and the exam at the end of the seven-year cycle. There will be no additional payments required to fulfill the seven-year cycle of MC-FP requirements. This payment plan is available any time after entry into the MC-FP Process. (This is Fast Trak.)

PLAN II: This annual payment plan allows you to make seven equal payments and guarantees the total cost of MC-FP at a fixed rate. It includes six SAMs, one PPM and the exam at the end of the seven-year cycle. This plan is only available during the first year you are scheduled to start the MC-FP Process.

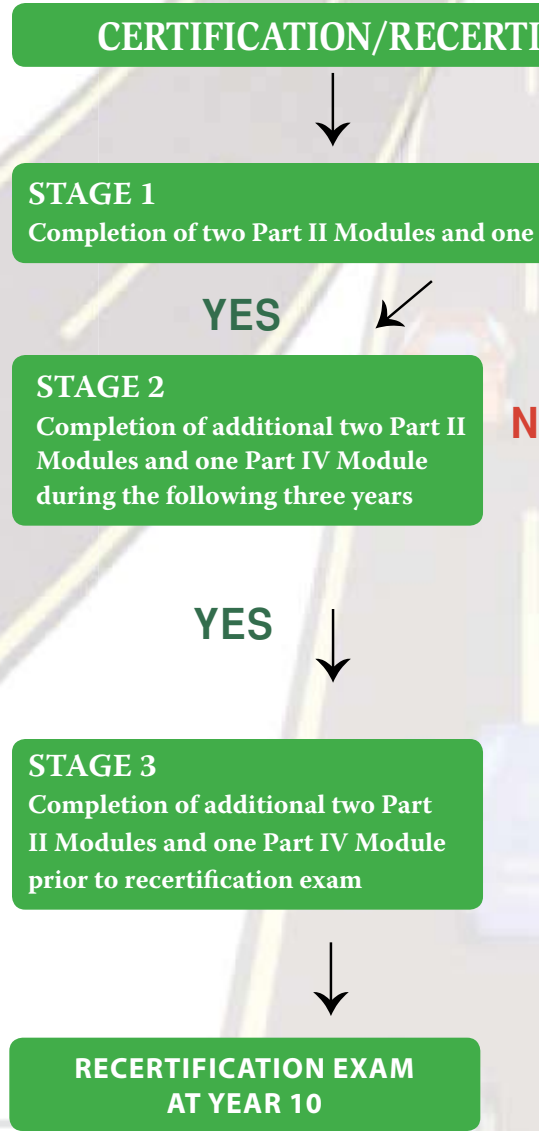
PLAN III: This pay-as-you-go payment plan allows you to pay for each component of MC-FP (six SAMs, one PPM and the exam as you take them). The fee for each component (including the examination) is not guaranteed and is expected to gradually increase over the seven-year cycle. (Throwing coins in the basket.)

PAYMENT PLAN CHANGES – Should you wish to move from Plan III to Plan II during your first year of participation, you may do so by paying the difference and then paying the appropriate annual payment for the next six years. If you wish to move from Plan III or Plan II to Plan I, you may do so at any time by paying the difference between your prior payments and the current Plan I fee.

If you choose one of the pre-payment plans, the pay-as-you-go fee for each component will be deducted from your payment(s) as you begin participation and the remainder carried forward toward the cost of the examination at the end of the seven-year cycle.

The schematic below illustrates how the 10-recertification class and beyond. In the 2003 Go to www.theabfm.org for details.

Note: You will retain your seven-year certification AND Stage 2 requirements – at which time





ARE WE THERE YET? HOW MUCH FURTHER? AND OTHER CAR GAMES

For those certifying or recertifying in 2006 and beyond, we have the answers to your frequently asked questions.

CAN ANYONE EXTEND THEIR CERTIFICATE BY THREE YEARS?

All successful certification or recertification candidates will receive a seven-year certificate from the ABFM and will be required to participate in MC-FP. Any Diplomate who is already participating in MC-FP (someone who certified or recertified since 2003) may earn an extension to his or her seven-year certificate. To earn the extension, you must successfully complete a combination of modules within a defined time frame. The process has been sectioned into three-year stages with specific requirements that must be successfully completed by the end of each stage. The requirements for each stage are the completion of two Part II modules and one Part IV module.

If you have not yet entered MC-FP, you will after your next Board exam. At that time, you'll be eligible to earn the extension.

WHICH MODULES DO I NEED TO TAKE?

If you are currently in MC-FP and working toward earning a three-year extension of your certificate, the requirements are two SAMs and one PPM module for a total of three modules for each three-year stage. You may complete these modules at your own pace, doing all in one year or one every year, but they all must be completed by the end of each three-year stage. A total of three stages, or nine modules, must be completed during the 10-year cycle in order to sit for your next recertification exam. If you fail to complete the requirements noted above for any stage, you will retain your original seven-year certificate.

To meet the requirements for the seven-year MC-FP cycle and in order to be eligible to sit for your next recertification exam, you will need to complete six Part II modules and one Part IV module.

HOW DO I KNOW WHERE I AM IN THE PROCESS?

If you are currently participating in the MC-FP program, you may login to your "Physician Portfolio" and "Track Your Progress" online at www.theabfm.org. Here you can review the modules you have successfully completed and what you still need to complete to fulfill the requirements for MC-FP. Remember that until the new MC-FP options are fully implemented in January 2007, your progress in your Physician Portfolio will be based upon the current seven-year MC-FP cycle.

If you certified or recertified in 2004 there is an alternative available in the first stage as further discussed later in these directions (look for the *).

I AM NOT A PRACTICING PHYSICIAN; DO I STILL NEED TO PARTICIPATE?

Yes, physicians who are administrators or who practice in settings which do not allow them to complete a PPM (e.g., urgent care or locum tenens) will still be required to participate in MC-FP. They will elect to complete a different type of Part IV activity; options include a Methods in Medicine Module (MIMM) or the Patient Safety Module (PSM). The first MIMM will be on information management. The PSM is expected to be available in 2007. The ABFM will be adding more MIMM options in the future.

ARE THE REQUIREMENTS THE SAME FOR EVERYONE?

The requirements are the same; however, your pathway to obtaining a three-year extension will vary somewhat, in terms of the combination of different types of modules, depending on whether or not you see patients in a clinical setting that will allow you to complete a PPM.

10-YEAR OPTION

year option works for members of the 2006, 2004, or 2005 recertification class?

ate until you successfully complete the Stage your certificate will be extended to 10-years.

RECERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

Part IV Module during the three-year period

NO

Completion of six Part II Modules and one Part IV Module prior to Recertification Exam

RECERTIFICATION EXAM AT YEAR 7

PART II Modules

Self-Assessment Modules or other approved external provider module. In the six years preceding the exam, Diplomates must complete an equivalent of 300 CME credits.

PART IV Modules

Depending on your practice setting and whether you see patients in continuity, this components requirements differ.

Traditional practice setting: patients seen in continuity options include PPM, Methods in Medicine Modules (MIMMs), Patient Safety Module (PSM), a METRIC from the AAFP or other approved external provider module.

Non-traditional practice setting: patients not seen in continuity or not seen at all options include MIMMs or PSM.



IF I JUST WANT TO RETAIN OR QUALIFY FOR A SEVEN-YEAR CERTIFICATE, DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE THE MODULES?

Yes. Participation in MC-FP is still a requirement for eligibility to sit for the recertification exam. You will still need to complete six Part II modules and one Part IV module prior to your next exam.

IF I AM BEHIND IN COMPLETING MY MODULES, HOW CAN I CATCH UP?

While three modules are required for every three-year stage, they may be completed at any time during that three-year stage. However, falling behind in either the first or second stage will automatically disqualify you from being granted the three-year extension necessary for a 10-year certificate.

HOW MANY MODULES FROM EXTERNAL PROVIDERS CAN WE USE IN A 10-YEAR CYCLE?

There is no limit on the number of modules that you can take from external providers, but there will be no reimbursement of any fees which might be paid to those providers for their modules.

DOES MC-FP REPLACE THE NEED FOR CME?

No, the requirement of 300 CME credits in the six years immediately prior to the exam remains. But remember, CME credit is awarded for completion of each of the modules associated with MC-FP.

I OBTAINED MY FIRST CERTIFICATE IN 2004; HOW DO I EXTEND MY CERTIFICATE TO 2014 INSTEAD OF 2011? *

Ready for this? It's complicated. You can extend your certificate if, by 2007 you complete either three Part II modules or two Part II modules, and a Part IV module, followed by the completion of two Part II modules and a Part IV module by 2010. You would then be required to complete two more Part II

modules and a Part IV module by 2014 in order to be eligible to sit for your next recertification exam in 2014.

CAN I SIT FOR THE RECERTIFICATION EXAM EARLY?

You may sit for the recertification exam early, but all of the MC-FP requirements will have to have been completed as if you were taking the exam in Year 7 or Year 10. In other words, you cannot participate in fewer modules than required by taking the exam early.

AM I REQUIRED TO TAKE THE MODULES ON THE INTERNET?

Yes, the module activities are only available as interactive Web applications. However, the knowledge assessment questions in the SAMs may be downloaded and printed for off-line completion. You would then need to return to the online SAM to enter your answers.

Since CME credit is available for all modules, you may take as many modules as you wish; however, any modules taken in excess of the Stage requirements cannot be counted toward MC-FP credit in a subsequent Stage. And, a module cannot be re-taken for MC-FP credit unless a new, updated version of the same module has been created.

YOUR FINAL DESTINATION

Still have questions about the MC-FP? Contact Shelly Rodrigues at (415) 345-8667 or e-mail srodrigues@familydocs.org. Or, better yet, you can contact the ABFM directly at (859) 269-5626 or visit their Web site at www.theabfm.org.

E-mail Us!

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ...

...Scope of Practice?

Sandra Newman at snewman@familydocs.org

Physicians should be awarded privileges based on training, experience, and demonstrated competence. Members experiencing problems getting or maintaining privileges may seek the assistance of the Academy.

...Maintenance of Certification?

Shelly Rodrigues at srodrigues@familydocs.org

Traditional board certification and re-certification examinations have been replaced by the new MC-FP program. CAFP is ready to assist with the process.

...Employment Contract Review?

Katie Achermann at kachermann@familydocs.org

To protect yourself before signing on the dotted line, consider having your contract reviewed by a knowledgeable attorney familiar with health care law and medical practice employment issues.

...Coding and Billing?

Sandra Newman at snewman@familydocs.org

Make sure you are being paid fully and fairly for all you do? Our coding and billing consultant, Mary Jean Sage, writes a column with helpful tips every other month for our Practice Management eNewsletter. She also responds to individual member questions, and we post her responses to www.familydocs.org/practice_resources.

...CME Reporting?

Karen Brent at kbrent@familydocs.org

Active members must submit at least 150 CME credits every three calendar years. We can help you find CME opportunities in your area.

...Student Affairs?

Katie Achermann at kachermann@familydocs.org

We can provide information on our Summer Preceptorship Program, scholarships, and residency programs in California.

...Submitting Letters to the Editor?

Tiffany Hasker at thasker@familydocs.org

We love to know what you think about the articles we publish. Or, feel free to sound off on any timely topic related to medical practice.

If you're looking for information about something not listed here, please e-mail cafp@familydocs.org.