



## **Update on the Innovative Pathway in Maintenance of Certification (MOC) for Focused Practice (FP) Recognition in Brachytherapy**

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By this time, most ABR radiation oncology (RO) diplomates are aware that on January 19, 2011, the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) Board of Directors voted to approve a pilot program for special recognition in brachytherapy proposed by the ABR. That approval triggered the initiation of a critical 12-month pre-implementation planning phase of the program, which will conclude in January 2012. Beginning in early March, applications will be accepted for participation in the program. Actual program implementation will take place over a three-year period, followed by a year of post-implementation evaluation. It is our hope that after the evaluation of the program, the ABMS will approve its permanent status.

During the pre-implementation period, an Advisory Committee was established and has met, by conference call, on a regular basis. Two Task Groups also were created within the Advisory Committee:

- Education Task Group – chaired by Akila Viswanathan, MD, of Harvard Medical School. This group is tasked with assuring an active, current, and vibrant inventory of brachytherapy-related Continuing Medical Education (CME) and Self-Assessment Module (SAM) programming.
- Registry/QA Task Group – chaired by Philip Devlin, MD, also of Harvard Medical School. This group is tasked with developing a national brachytherapy registry and methodology for initial and ongoing quality assurance case review for program participants.

Additional pre-implementation tasks are ongoing within the ABR infrastructure, including changes in the individual personal database (PDB) to accommodate the focused practice applications, survey instruments, and records maintenance. Upgrades to the brachytherapy elements of the MOC cognitive examination (Part III) to accommodate a specific brachytherapy-related module, which will stress quality and safety as well as all other aspects of clinical brachytherapy, are also being implemented. A public and payer educational awareness campaign regarding the program is being developed as well.

Diplomates with an interest in brachytherapy should strongly consider participating in this innovative program that, though not designed to be a subspecialty or subspecialty certificate,

will offer them additional visible and credible recognition in this important area of radiation oncology. In the future, a lookup of an FP-Brachytherapy diplomate on the ABMS website and the ABR website will yield MOC certification status and a statement that the candidate has Focused Practice Recognition in Brachytherapy.

Diplomates with non-time-limited certificates (also referred to as lifetime certificates) should keep in mind that the brachytherapy program is an added element of the current ABR Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program, and as such, participation in this program will require active participation in MOC.

Application requirements include:

- Certification in radiation oncology by the ABR.
- Current and active participation in the ABR MOC program. Failure to meet all requirements by the end of the 10-year MOC cycle will result in loss of Focused Practice Recognition.
- Completion of a minimum of three years of practice following completion of initial certification.
- Performance of a minimum of 30 unproctored interstitial and/or intracavitary cases.

Subsequent issues of *The Beam* will provide additional details regarding specifics of the application and participation process, and individual questions can be addressed to [pwallner@theabr.org](mailto:pwallner@theabr.org) or [fprb@theabr.org](mailto:fprb@theabr.org).