



ACOG-ABOG JOINT STATEMENT: POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN PHYSICIAN MAINTENANCE OF SKILLS THREATENS WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE

Ob-Gyns support our maintenance of certification (MOC) process, implemented by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG). We rely on our MOC to test and update our knowledge and clinical skills on a yearly basis, ensuring we provide the highest level of care to our patients, and that our care is based on the latest scientific evidence. The ob-gyn MOC program is a great success story of self-, not government, regulation, driven by the best interests of our patients and women's health.

We urge state lawmakers not to interfere with our decades of successful self-regulation and to realize that each medical specialty has its own experience with its MOC program.

Rather than being imposed on ob-gyns, the ob-gyn MOC process was developed with extensive early and ongoing input from the ob-gyn specialty. In fact, ABOG was the first Board to develop an MOC process together with its specialty society, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Ob-gyns find MOC user-friendly and a real bargain, costing only \$265 annually, and providing participants 25 continuing medical education credits. In addition, ob-gyns are allowed to take the MOC exam as many as five times in their sixth MOC year to pass; and only about 20 fail to qualify annually.

Maintaining excellence in physician education and training through our MOC program is key to how we ensure the health of women and families in our State. MOC is the only valid, objective and reliable measure of up to date knowledge for an ob-gyn physician to practice within his or her specialty area. Ob-gyn's MOC program effectively and objectively sorts out which ob-gyns are qualified to provide patient care.

State proposals to weaken MOC threaten women's health and should not be applied to ob-gyn. These proposals undermine and interfere with our gold standard in ob-gyn continuing professional development that allows women's health care physicians in our state to practice at the very highest levels with up-to-date knowledge and clinical skills. Importantly, this legislation would turn back the clock on progress in reducing preventable maternal deaths – a priority for our State.

Our ob-gyn MOC program and certification:

- ✓ keeps knowledge and skills current so physicians can deliver appropriate, evidence-based care to patients;
- ✓ helps patients select the most qualified physicians to assist them with their complex obstetric and gynecologic issues;

- ✓ was key to informing ob-gyns across the nation about the Zika virus, equipping women's health physicians with the most up-to-date evidence, protocols and tools to care for affected women and families;
- ✓ supports the important oversight work of our state medical licensing board;
- ✓ helps our state attract and retain the 'best and the brightest' of women's health care physicians; and
- ✓ has the support of practicing ob-gyns.

From the ACOG Statement of Policy, *Certification and Procedural Credentialing*, reaffirmed in 2015:

"ACOG recognizes that ongoing education, training and experience are necessary to maintain competence and to assure development of competence in newly introduced procedures or technologies. To accomplish this, physicians should participate in continuing medical education programs, the ABOG Maintenance of Certification process as appropriate, and be familiar with current information and guidelines on patient care. In addition, physicians should review their individual patient outcome data, and participate in quality assurance programs that are relevant to the care they provide and to the procedures they perform. Obstetrician-gynecologists who desire to expand their procedural skills should participate in appropriate educational and training programs. Physicians will need to follow their institutional credentialing guidelines and requirements when applying for privileges to perform these procedures.

In conclusion, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists reaffirms that current certification by ABOG and maintenance of certification of obstetrician-gynecologists is validation of the medical, surgical, imaging and laboratory knowledge and patient care skills relevant to the practice of the specialty. No additional certification should be required for credentialing for those procedures and care which fall within the scope of an individual's current ABOG certification."

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Contact: Stateleg@acog.org