

## **Testimony on Michigan HB 4135**

**Larisa Traill , M.D.**

Representative Vaupel and Distinguished Committee Members, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. My name is Dr. Larisa Traill. I am a board certified emergency physician by the American Board of Emergency Medicine, ABEM. I am licensed here in Michigan and practice at the University of Michigan, Mid Michigan Health, Gratiot and Alpena Emergency Departments. I speak in opposition to House Bill 4135.

By way of disclosure, I am also the President of the Michigan College of Emergency Physicians or MCEP, which is similar to the Michigan State Medical Society in many ways, but for Emergency Physicians. I speak in support of Board Certification including Maintenance of Certification, MOC, because I believe patients, their families, hospitals, and members of the care team must have a way to identify those physicians who are meeting a higher standard for specialty care than simply whether or not they have a medical license. Patients cannot choose their emergency physician and the American Board of Emergency Medicine, helps to ensure patients receive only the highest quality emergency care. House Bill 4135 is the first step in eroding the value of medical board certification.

Board Certification by an American Board of Medical Specialties, ABMS, Member Board *matters* because it helps the public know that we, as board certified physicians, have met a rigorous national standard. To payers interested in rewarding quality, board certification matters.

It matters because it is not merely a way for physicians to maintain currency in an area of specialization, but is also an external, independent,

assessment of competencies and medical knowledge. Though Continuing Medical Education— or CME, which is what Michigan requires to maintain a license—serves an important role in facilitating learning, it is not an externally validated assessment of a physician's medical knowledge. We are periodically evaluated to ensure that we are staying up to date in both the knowledge and skills needed to provide quality care in our specialty. Numerous research studies show that ABMS board certified physicians practice safer, higher quality medicine, and tend to have fewer disciplinary actions by state medical licensing boards. MOC improves the quality of care.

Think of it this way... just as the State of Michigan has, in its wisdom, determined that State Licensure must be renewed frequently, so too must the vital credential of board certification be periodically renewed.

Speaking to my own experiences, I didn't fully understand what MOC was until I was doing it. My MOC requirements are relevant and have helped keep me up to date in my specialty and participation in MOC has been an effective way to learn new information throughout my career. In fact, I have learned significantly more from my MOC than I have from many of my CME activities. It is not onerous. My certifying board is receptive and easy to reach; if I were to have any questions or concerns there are resources readily available. MOC does not require me to constantly monitor my certifying board's website.

I oppose House Bill 4135 because it diminishes the most valuable professional credential I can hold, a credential that requires adhering to rigorous standards, and one that is a source of pride for me. This bill would

set Michigan apart as adopting *the lowest common standard* by which physicians would be rewarded for patient care. Michigan would be set apart as winning the race to the bottom.

If Board Certification and MOC, *by law*, cannot be taken into account for remuneration, then all physicians would be defined by the lowest common denominator of medical licensure. Under this law, an important incentive for physicians to achieve excellence would be removed. Why would Michigan adopt a system that does not reward excellence?

In short, high standards for Board Certification *matter* and the Michigan College of Emergency Physicians hopes you will not prevent this important standard from serving as the invaluable quality indicator it has for so many decades.

Again, I ask that you oppose this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this morning and for the work you do on behalf of the citizens of Michigan.

