



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
PLASTIC SURGEONS®



THE PLASTIC SURGERY
FOUNDATION®

Executive Office

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October 4, 2017

The Honorable Bo Watson, *Chair*
Maintenance of Certification Task Force
Tennessee General Assembly
301 6th Avenue North
Suite 307 War Memorial Building
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: **Maintenance of Certification**

Dear Members of the Maintenance of Certification Task Force:

On behalf of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), we strongly urge you to not make any changes to hospitals' and insurance companies' ability to consider the maintenance of certification process in important decisions.

Founded in 1931, ASPS is the largest association of plastic surgeons in the world, representing over 7,000 members, 94 percent of all plastic surgeons certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery, and nearly 150 surgeons in Tennessee. We are committed to ensuring our patients have the best care possible, and we believe that, across the practice of medicine, such a commitment requires physicians to: (1) stay abreast of the latest clinical research and standards of care; (2) demonstrate their mastery of the latest knowledge through objective and reliable assessment methods; and (3) integrate this knowledge into their practice. We believe that American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) boards in general, and the American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) specifically, are critical to our members meeting these commitments. Furthermore, we believe the commitment to lifelong learning and clinical practice improvement that board certification and maintenance of certification (MOC) represent are not just appropriate criteria, but essential.

Eliminating maintenance of certification usurps the right of hospitals and insurers to determine what standards they require. Further reduction of maintenance of certification requirements deprives patients of the confidence to know that their doctor is board certified and has maintained that board certification. Without this confirmation, patients may not be provided with the highest quality of care possible and cannot be assured that their physician has the current knowledge and skills necessary to perform their operation successfully.

The duration, breadth, and scope of training required by ABMS member-boards is the best validation of physician knowledge. While there has been displeasure in the physician community with the MOC requirements of certain ABMS member boards, this displeasure has been recognized and it is being acted upon. The ABMS is committed to ensuring that its member boards are identifying and implementing user-friendly, cost-effective, and educationally-valuable methods of continuing education as the means of maintaining certification.

Most importantly, the life-long learning inherent in MOC is based on academic and practical training that will ultimately improve the care received by patients throughout Tennessee. ASPS applauds the ABMS, and particularly the ABPS, for maintaining standards that reflect the needs and demands for patient safety and the highest level of physician practice.

Requiring ABMS-board certification is truly a matter of patient safety, and requiring such certification is well within the prerogative of hospitals and health plans. We therefore request that you **do not make any changes to the use of maintenance of certification by hospitals and insurance companies.** Please do not hesitate to contact Patrick Hermes, Senior Manager of Advocacy and Government Affairs, at pghermes@plasticsurgery.org or (847) 228-3331 with any questions or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Johnson MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Debra Johnson, MD
President, American Society of Plastic Surgeons