

# Message From the Associate Executive Director

## ABNM CertLink Review

**Leonie Gordon, MBChB** – *Associate Executive Director, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

The new longitudinal assessment (CertLink) provides our diplomates with the flexibility to maintain certification at your own pace amidst the demands of your busy life. It was launched in April 2018 as a pilot program and was approved as a continuing certification assessment tool by American Board of Medical Specialties in November 2021. It is an alternate for the ten-year MOC examination. There were 292 diplomates participating in CertLink in the initial cohort. Enrollment deadline for diplomates with certificates expiring in 2018-2021 was November 2017. Diplomates could choose to enroll in the pilot or take the MOC examination. If they chose to enroll in the pilot, the expiration date of their certification was extended to 12/31/21. Diplomates who missed the enrollment deadline could start participating after the launch in April 2018 but needed to pass the MOC examination before the expiration date of their original certificate. Diplomates who chose to enroll in the pilot needed to start participating in April 2018 and were expected to answer 9 new questions and up to 4 repeat questions per quarter. Questions not attempted or unanswered were automatically marked as incorrect. When questions were presented more than one time, the answer to the question on final presentation replaced the previous answer. The assessment period for the pilot was April 2018 - December 2020. Diplomates with CertLink scores at or above a psychometrically determined passing score could re-certify without taking the MOC examination if they also met all other MOC requirements. Diplomates below the passing score were informed they needed to pass the 2021 MOC examination to re-certify.

Recently, ABNM board with the help of ABMS psychometricians analyzed questions delivered from the formal launch of CertLink in April 2018 through December 2020. A small number of questions were deleted from scoring after statistical analysis of their performance, or due to technical problems with delivery. Scoring results were quality controlled by ABMS and ABNM staff to ensure their validity. There were 90 primary questions delivered

during the assessment period. Questions were selected from a larger pool of questions, so diplomates did not all receive the same questions. Seven questions were deleted from scoring. The number of questions deleted from scoring (0 - 7) varied among diplomates depending on which questions they received. To determine the passing score, a committee of content matter experts provided an estimate of question difficulty, based on the percentage of “minimally competent physicians” (physicians that fall right at the pass-point) that would be expected to answer the question correctly. These ratings were averaged across all items. The psychometrically determined passing score was 57% of questions answered correctly on final presentation

The score shown on the CertLink dashboard shows how diplomates compare to their peers. The score is not equal to the final score because it does not include unanswered questions in some cases and does not include questions deleted from scoring for all diplomates because of issues detected at the end of the assessment period. 33/292 diplomates did not achieve a passing score (11.3%), but 20 diplomates answered fewer than 81 questions. Excluding these 20 diplomates who did not fully participate, the pass rate was 259/272 (95.2%). ABNM plans to analyze the data earlier in subsequent years to allow those diplomates who may need to take the MOC examination more time to prepare. Currently there is no additional cost to diplomates to take the MOC examination.

ABNM feels that by adding CertLink improved our continuing certification program and hopes the experience supports your ongoing educational efforts while helping you demonstrate to your patients and the public that you're keeping up with advances in nuclear medicine.



Leonie Gordon  
Associate Executive Director