It is my pleasure and honor to rejoin the ABNM, now in the position of Associate Executive Director, in support of the Director and 3 additional full-time staff members responsible for all Board activities. My prior experience as an ABNM Director was several years ago (2008-2014). Many aspects of Board work are familiar and relatively unchanged, however, there are new and exciting innovations and improvements since my prior experiences.

Of greatest potential impact is the development and implementation of the CertLink® program supporting Part 3 of our required ABMS MOC program. This program is now fully active and is subscribed by approximately 1,250 of our active diplomates. ABNM has now delivered 162 question items since the hard launch in April 2018.

While the initial roll-out of the program is finished, CertLink is not a “final product”. We will continue to monitor system performance, review comments and concerns raised by participating diplomates, and make improvements to the program.

There are several issues raised by CertLink participants that are relatively independent of specific items.

Most commonly these relate to challenges with image display and review and to the desire to re-review questions and images as part of the item feedback display. Regarding the former issue, ABNM will re-emphasize image clarity in question presentations. The CertLink examination environment does not offer a “zoom” function, as was present in an earlier released version. However, diplomates can achieve a similar enlargement of displayed images by increasing magnification in the overall display port settings. Instructions for this function are (or will be) provided in the FAQ section of the CertLink information section at login. The frequent requests for review of the questions and images at the item response feedback level are currently under exploration by the Board. If feasible, this functionality may be added in future question releases.

Another level of feedback from ABNM diplomates is reflected by relatively item-specific observations, including concerns about the possibility of additional correct responses, concerns about the evidence-basis of the correct response and critique, as well as the overall relationship of question topics to individual diplomate’s ongoing clinical practice experience. These are important issues and the ABNM oversight approach includes a review of each comment offered by a participant. In instances where there is an unanticipated valid concern about the structure of the item, it may be deleted from final scoring – these items will not influence to the overall diplomate score for determination of successful completion of MOC Part 3.

In addition, ABNM reviews the psychometric performance of each question and considers deletion from scoring of items that do not support the overall validity of the CertLink assessment.

Diplomates should recognize that the intent of the CertLink program is to provide a summative assessment of ability for part 3 recertification, but equally importantly, to provide a formative basis for continued learning in Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (NMMI). Many diplomates practice in a sub-specialized aspect of NMMI (e.g., pediatrics, cardiovascular, etc.), but will need to remain aware of overall innovations in the entire field. ABNM certification is not limited to any of our sub-specializations. Certification and continued certification should support a diplomate’s cognitive mastery of the entire field. To this end, each CertLink item is accompanied by a descriptive critique and literature citation(s) providing an entry to further learning and understanding of new aspects of clinical NMMI.

In summary, I am enthusiastic to again engage in the work of ABNM and our diplomates. We intend to continue to improve our services in support of our diplomates, our patients, and the overall healthcare environment.

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Associate Executive Director