



ABR MOC: A Peek Behind the Curtain

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ABR Diagnostic MP Trustee



Learning Objectives

- To understand the roles and responsibilities of ABR Medical Physics Trustees.
- To learn how the MOC program is assessed and how changes are reviewed and implemented.

Outline

- Overview and Organization of the ABR
- Roles and Responsibilities of Medical Physics Trustees
- Original implementation, background and history of ABR MOC
- How does the ABR assess the MOC program
- ABR consideration of MOC potential improvements
- ABR MOC modifications, communication and implementation
- Changes to MOC since implementation
- ABR Diagnostic OLA committee



Overview and Organization of the ABR



Development of the Certification Board Process

- Movement to insure quality within the medical specialties
- Driven by quality and patient protection
 - ✓ Not controlled by AMA
 - ✓ Not controlled by specialty societies
 - ✓ Independent of state and national government

American Board of Ophthalmology was First - 1917





1917

Others

Founding Boards

1933

American Board of Dermatology
American Board of Obstetrics and
Gynecology
American Board of Ophthalmology
American Board of Otolaryngology
– Head and Neck Surgery



American Board
of Medical Specialties

Higher standards. Better care.®

ABR

AMERICAN
BOARD OF
RADIOLOGY

Founded 1934

Joined 1935

ABR



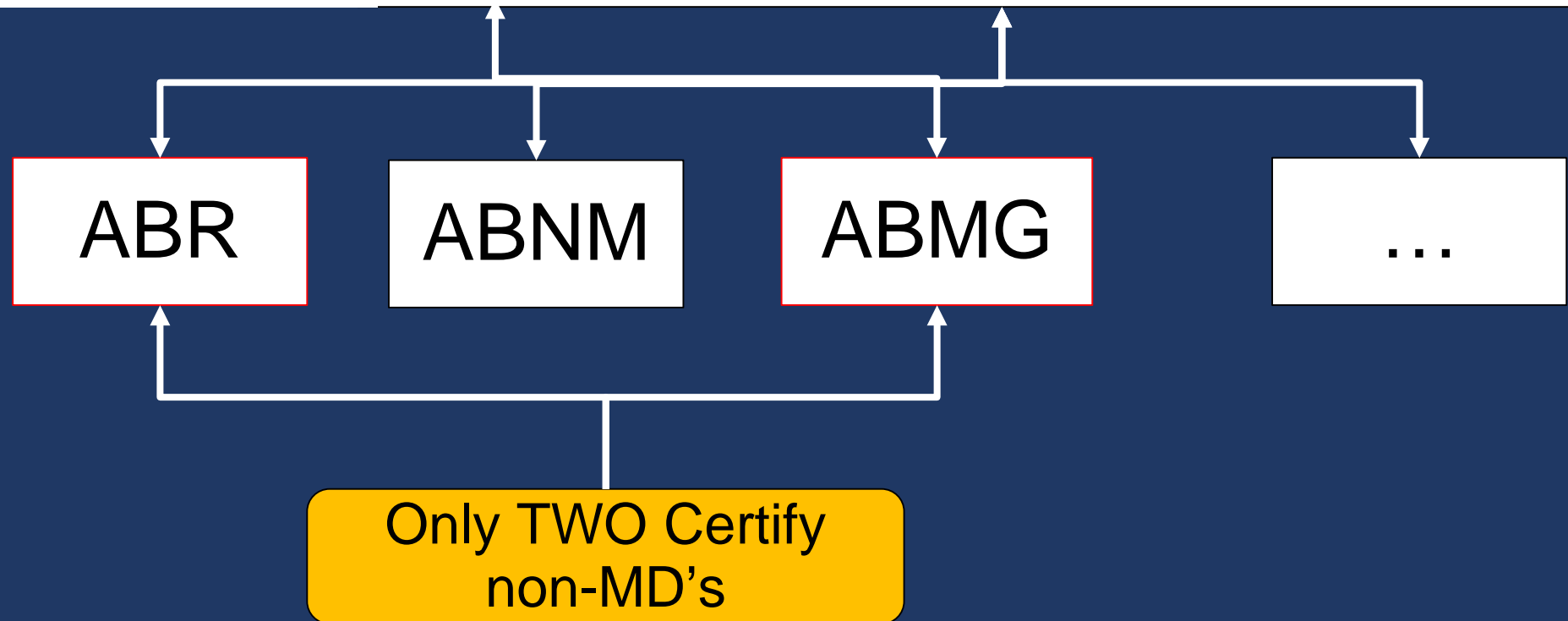


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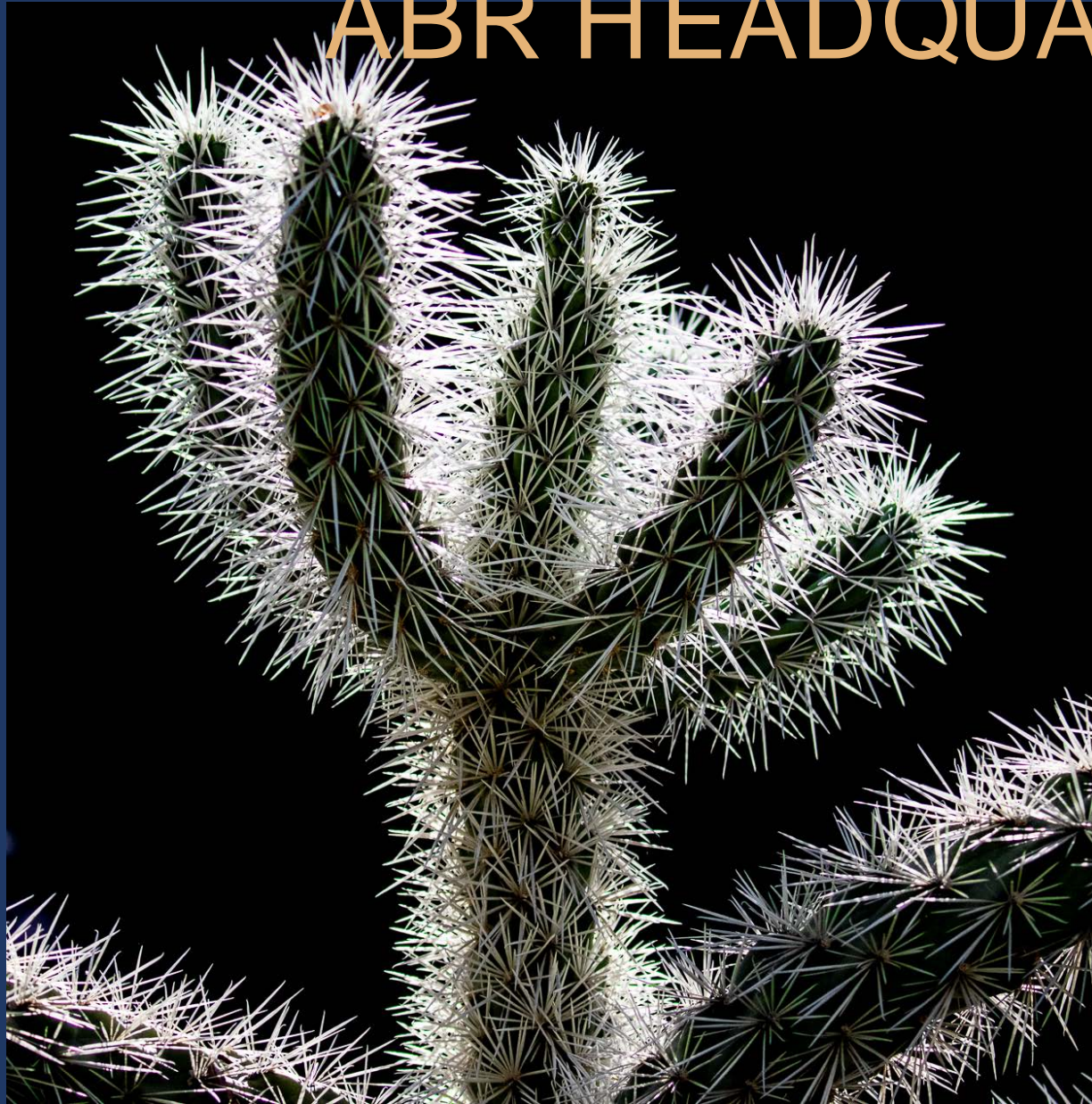
24 Boards



ABR - MISSION

- ABR mission is to certify that their diplomates demonstrate the requisite knowledge, skill, and understanding of their disciplines to the benefit of patients.
- ABR was founded to protect the public by assessing and certifying doctors who meet specific educational, training, and professional requirements.

ABR HEADQUARTERS – TUCSON, AZ



Locations

- Headquarters are in Tucson
 - ✓ We have an exam center in Tucson at headquarters
 - ✓ We do our oral exams in Tucson at a hotel adjacent to the headquarters
- We have an exam center in Chicago





Where does M P fit
into this?

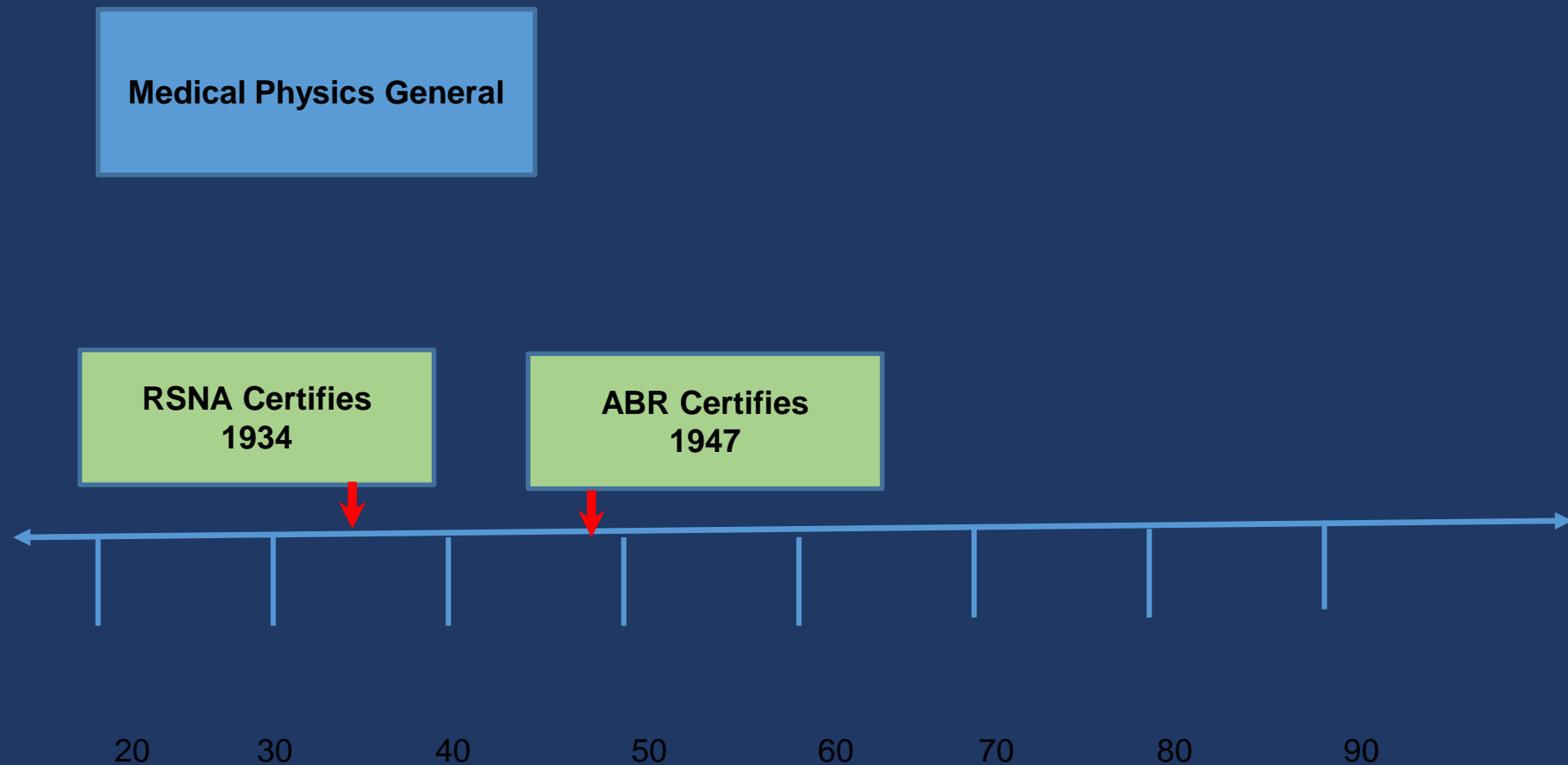


Original Certification by RSNA - 1934

- Need to certify physicists was seen
 - ✓ Critical need for calibration for radiation therapy
 - Teletherapy & Brachytherapy
- Same year ABR was formed
- No AAPM so RSNA undertook the role
- Around 1940 a consensus that certification naturally should be with the ABR
 - ✓ WWII delayed things but in 1947 certification was transferred to the ABR

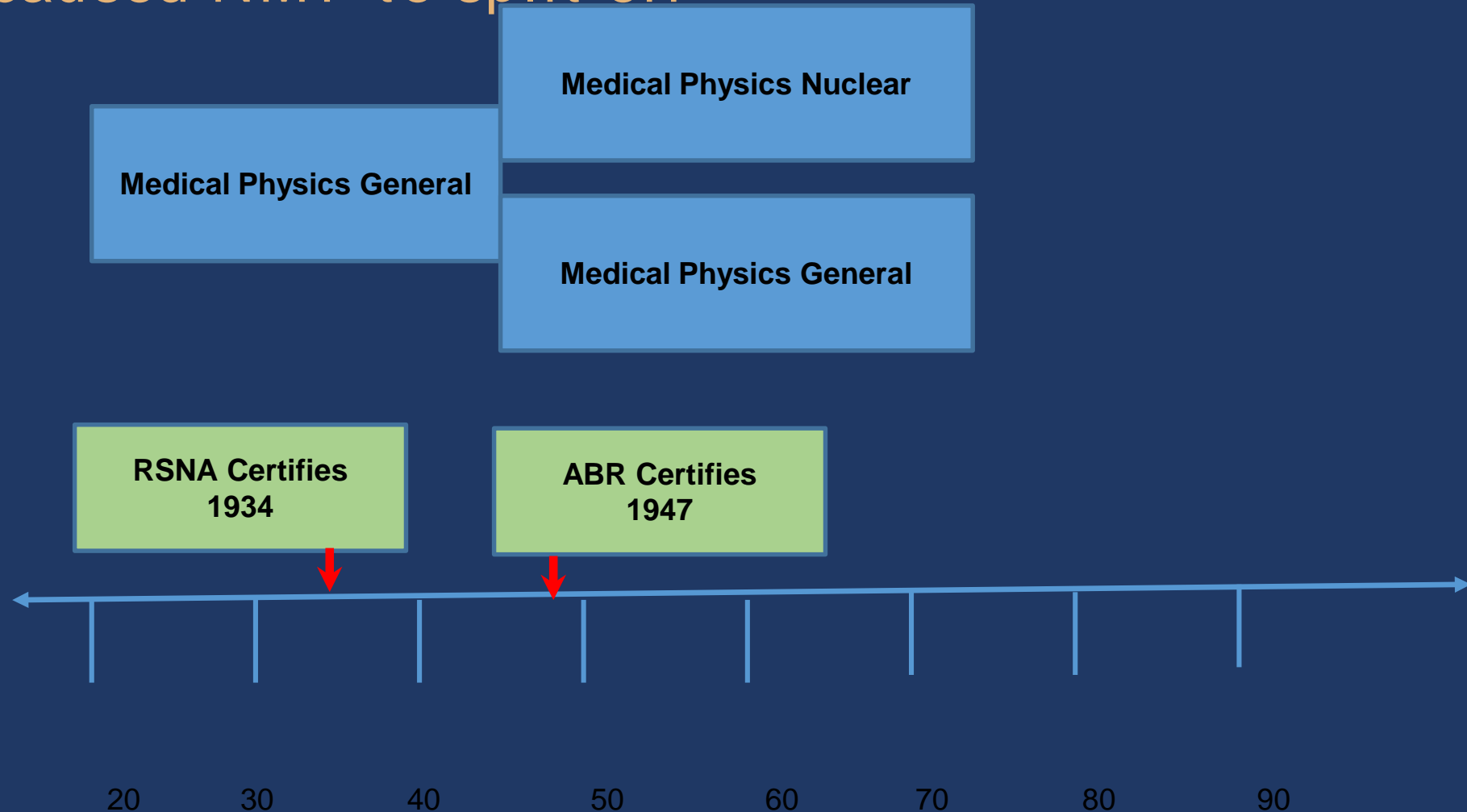
History

In the earliest days physicists were needed for dose calculations in therapy



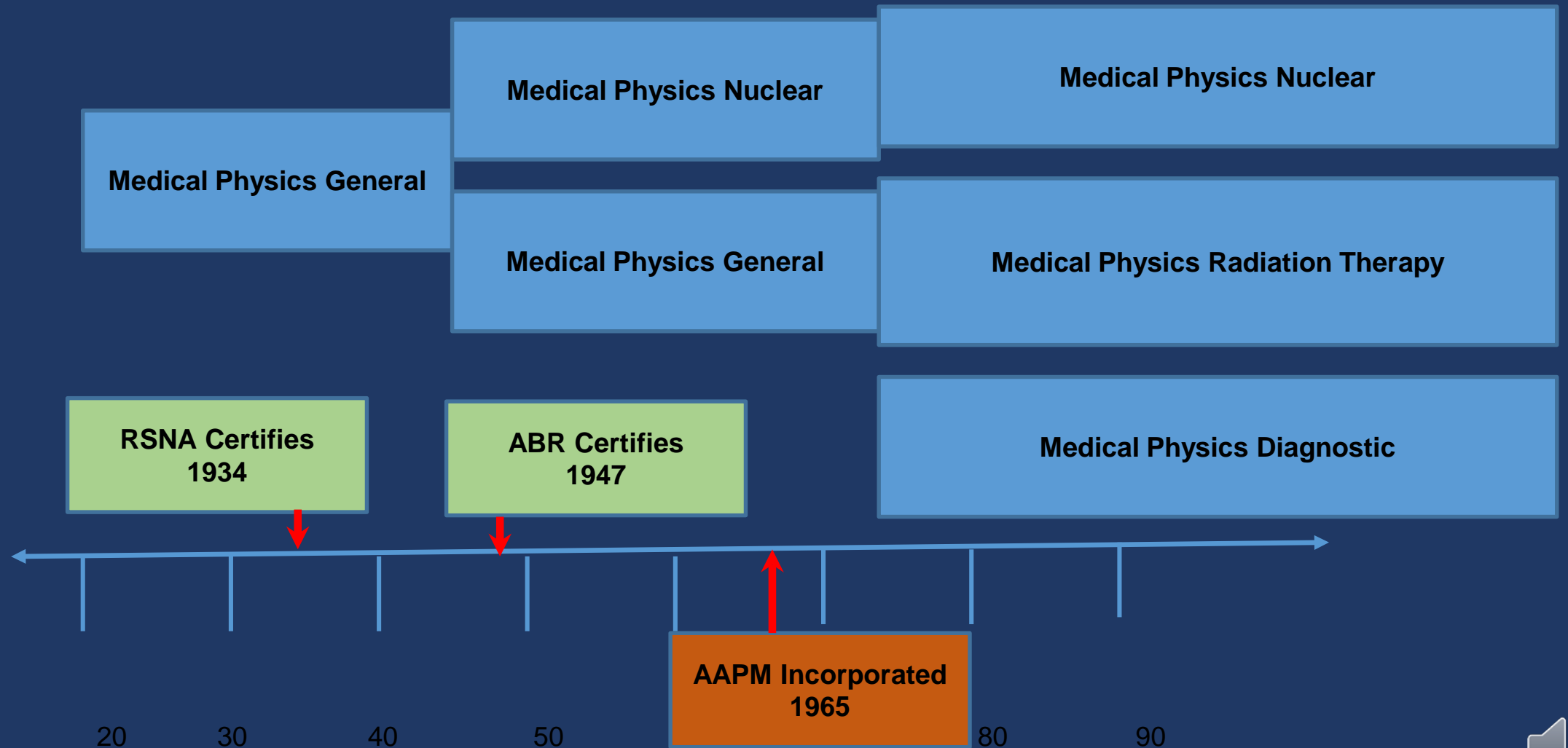
History

After WW II the availability of radioactive material caused NMP to split off



History

In the mid- 70's , as both DX and RO became more complex
physicists began to specialize in TMP- only or DMP- only



ABR certifies

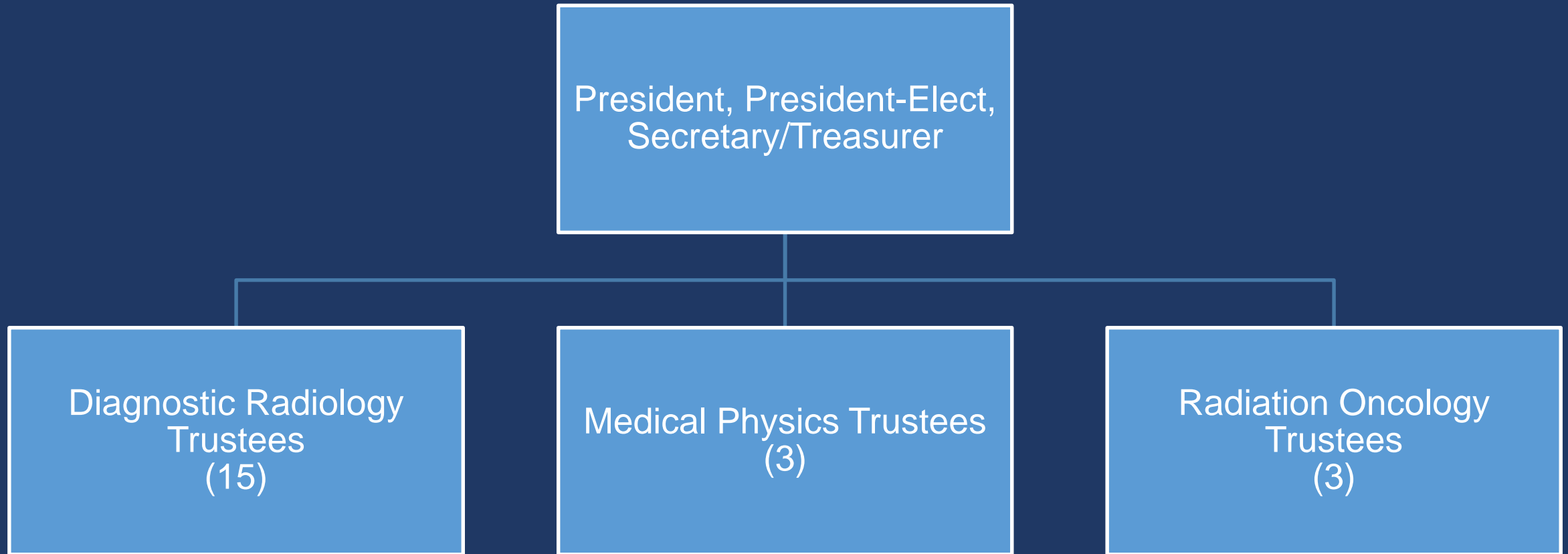
- Diagnostic Radiologists
- Interventional Radiologists
- Medical Physicists
 - Diagnostic Medical Physicists
 - Nuclear Medical Physicists
 - Therapeutic Medical Physicists
- Radiation Oncologists

In Medical Physics

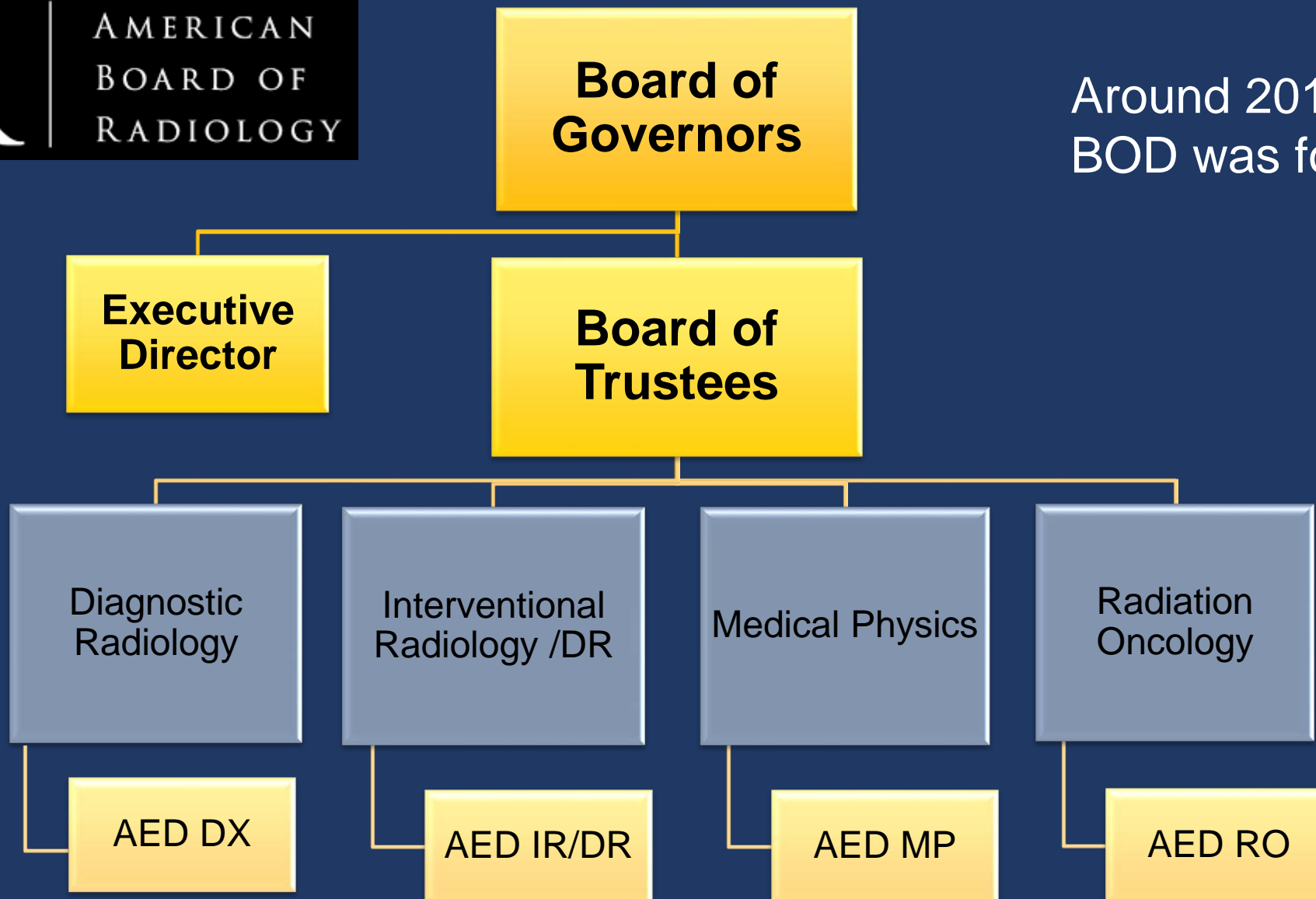
Ratio

40 TMP/8 DMP/1 NMP

ABR - Evolution

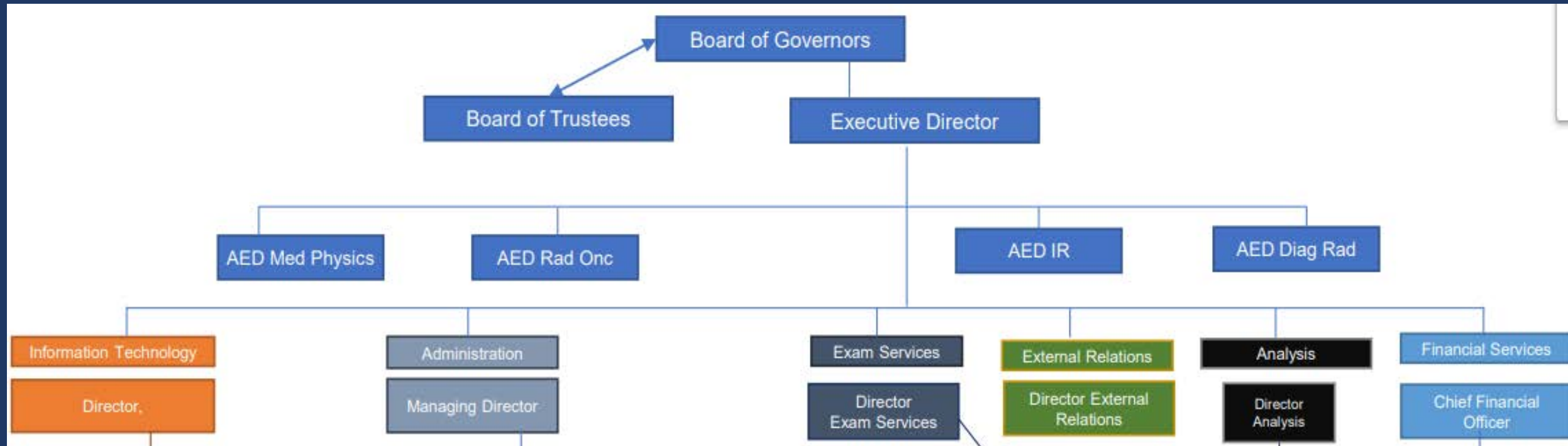


Around 2015,
BOD was formed



ABR staff of about 90

The Governors and Trustees are Volunteers



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Member of
the Public



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Associate Professor of
Practice
Management & Organization
Business Communication



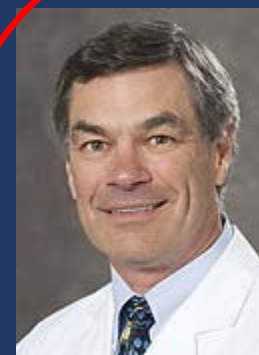
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ABR Board of Trustees - 2020

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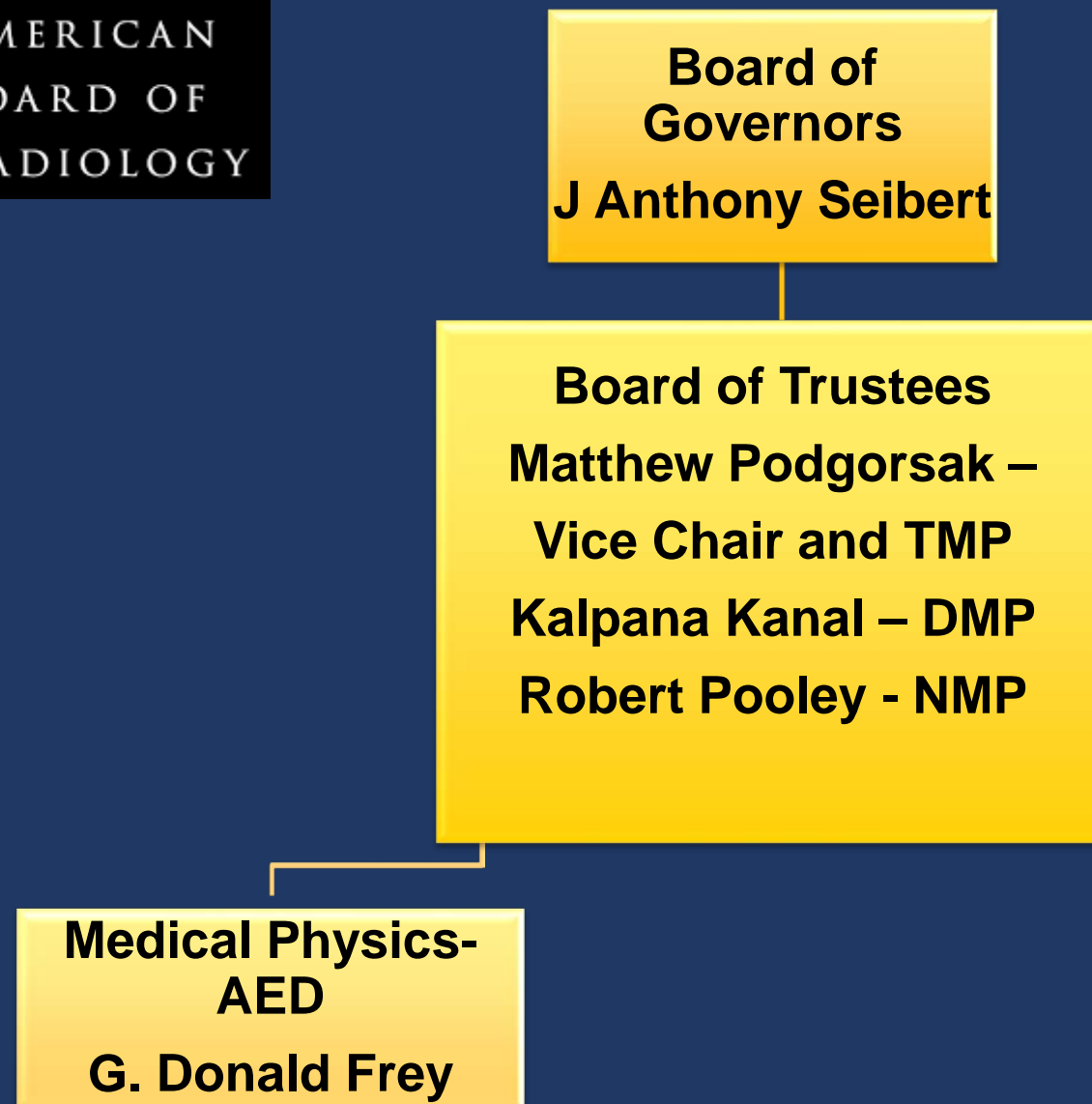


Matthew B. Podgorsak, PhD
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Nuclear Medical Physics
Jacksonville, Florida

Medical Physics



ABR BOG

- The Board of Governors (7 to 11 members) is responsible for ABR financial affairs, initial certification and MOC program processes, communications, strategic planning and priority setting, intersociety relations and outreach, and oversight of American Board of Medical Specialty matters.

ABR Trustees

- The Board of Trustees advances the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the ABR's exams for initial certification and Maintenance of Certification across all disciplines of radiology. The trustees make operational decisions, including exam goals, format, content, quality, assembly, delivery, scoring, and feedback.
- Members of the Board of Trustees have specific specialty and subspecialty expertise, reflecting major areas of current clinical practice.

Physics Trustees – Roles and Responsibilities

- Exams
 - ✓ Committee operations
 - ✓ Blueprints
 - ✓ Annual schedule of exam development
 - ✓ Oral exam planning
- Annual face to face meetings with other organizations
 - ✓ AAPM, SDAMPP, IC Advisory, etc.
- Program Quality Improvement
 - ✓ Internal (e.g. changes that don't affect diplomates, but help ABR operations, committees, etc), DR Core, DR Cert
 - ✓ External (changes that affect diplomates)

Physics Trustees – Roles and Responsibilities

- Communications
 - ✓ Articles – AAPM newsletter, ABR BEAM
 - ✓ Presentations: Chapter meetings, RSNA, AAPM meetings, Board meetings
- Review applications for Part 2
- Operational issues (item writing software, modified score sheets)
- Review policies



Maintenance of Certification (MOC)





Why MOC?



Where did MOC come from?

- Scientific Research
 - ✓ In professions that were studied professional competence decreased over time
- Public Concerns
 - ✓ Focus Groups
 - Strongly recommended an MOC program with an exam
- Professional Interest
 - ✓ Keep MOC with the boards
 - NOT the government
 - NOT Insurance companies
 - NOT TJC

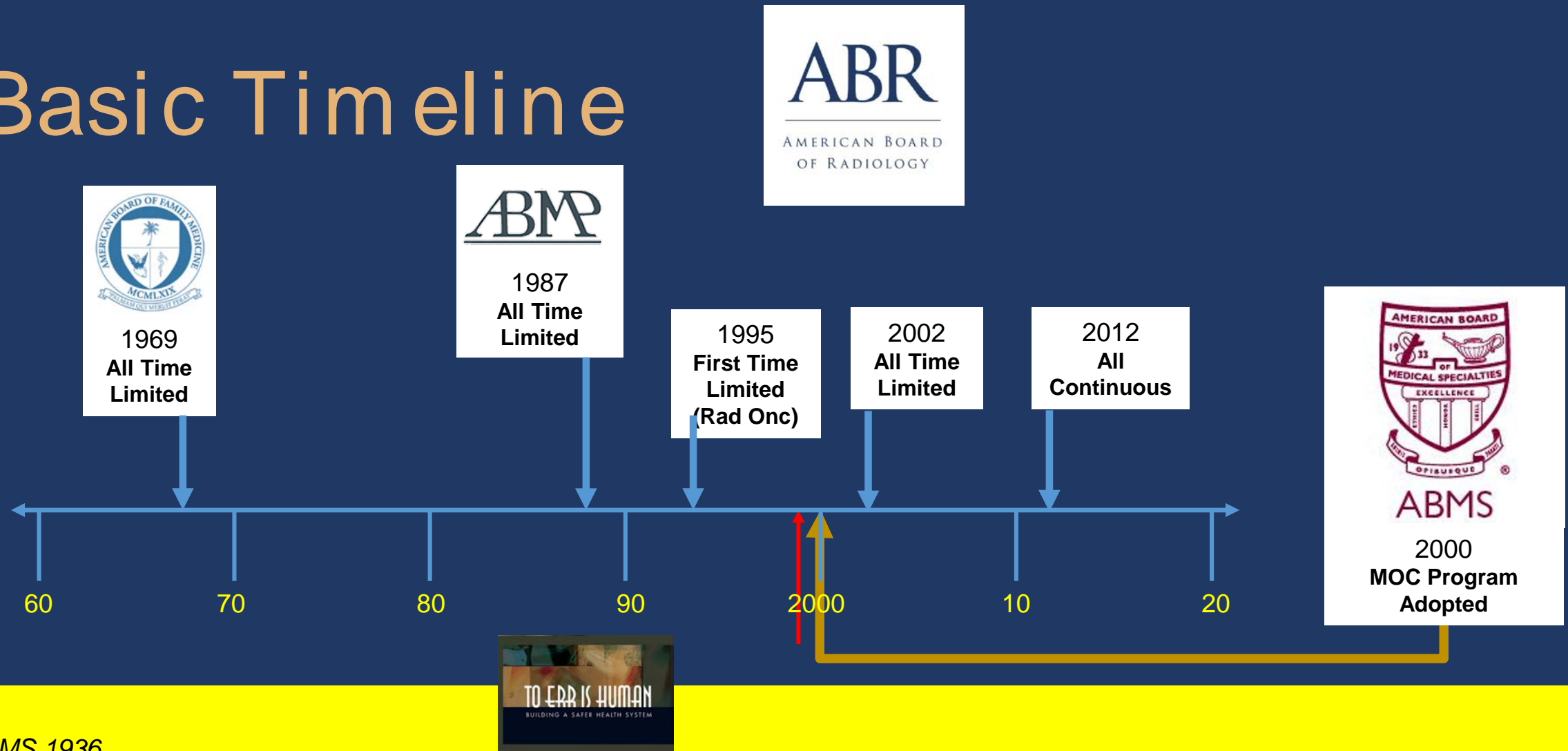
ABMS Public Reporting

ABR Response to ABMS Public Reporting Requirements

- ABR online verification of board eligibility and MOC participation statuses in coordination with ABMS reporting
- Link from ABMS site to ABR site for further clarification on various statuses
- Diplomate look-up tool
- Immediate, current verification status



Basic Timeline



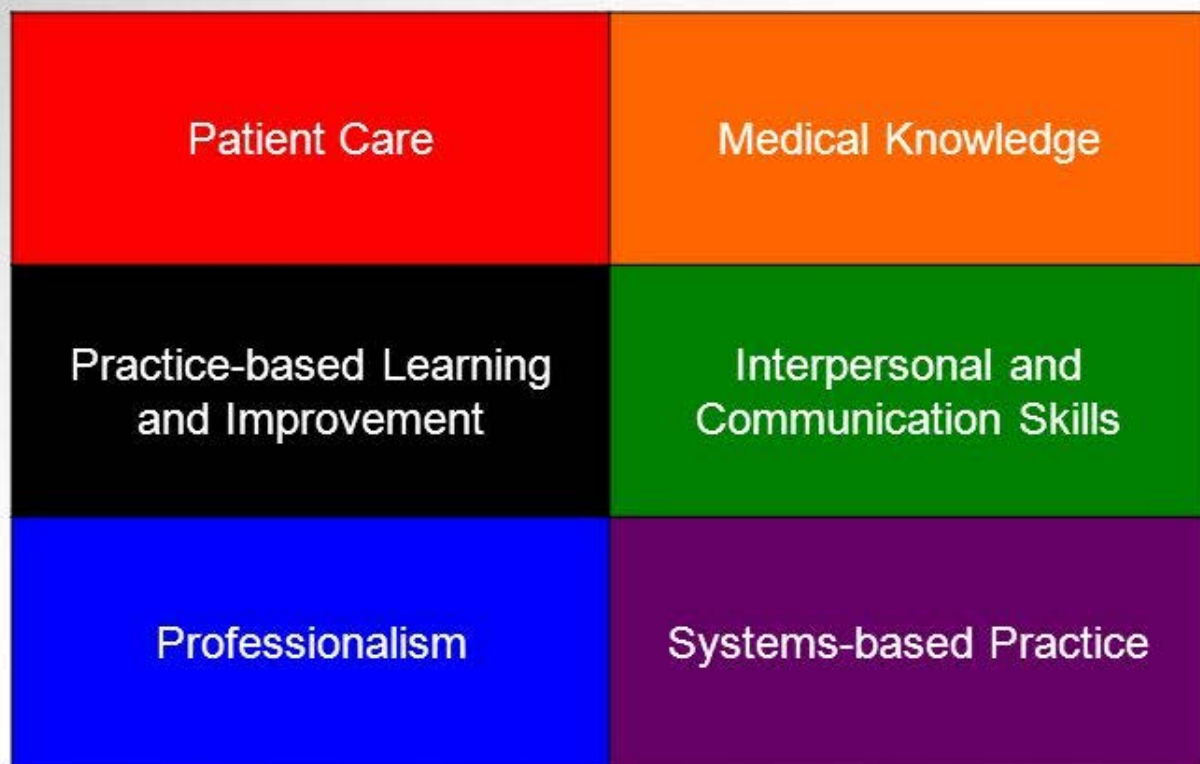
ABMS 1936

Many persons argue that certification of a specialist indicates that he is up-to-date and competent at the time of examination but that this does not prove that he continues indefinitely thereafter to be competent and aware of all important new knowledge in his field. This is obviously true and, as the certifying Boards become established and as they complete the examination of the large group of physicians already practicing the specialties, they may find it desirable to issue certificates that are valid for a stated period only.

Why MOC?

- Demonstrates commitment to lifelong learning and self-assessment
- Allows the physicist to self-direct own continuing education
- Results in continuous quality improvement

The Six Core Competencies



Original
ACGME List

- Widely
adopted
beyond the
boards
TJC,
Hospitals

Why MOC?



MOC helps further development of the six key competencies....

- Medical knowledge
- Patient Care and Procedural Skills
- Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Professionalism
- Practice-based Learning and Improvement
- Systems-based Practice



ABR

MOC Component

Professionalism and Professional Standing

Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment

Assessment of Knowledge, Judgment, and Skill

Improvement in Medical Practice

ABR MOC began in 2007

ABR MOC - MP

Schedule for MOC Annual Reviews

MOC Year	MOC Elements Checked
First	Licensure and OLA
Second	Licensure and OLA
Third	Licensure and OLA
Fourth	First FULL Annual Review: Licensure, CME/SA-CME, OLA, PQI, Audit
Fifth and beyond	Licensure, CME/SA-CME, OLA, PQI, Audit

<https://www.theabr.org/medical-physics/maintenance-of-certification/moc-participation-guidelines>

ABR MOC - MP

- Part 3 requires passing the most recent summative decision for the OLA or having passed a traditional exam in the previous 5 years.
- In May 2016, the ABR announced its plans to move away from the 10-year exam to OLA.
- How will I know if I am passing Part 3?
- A passing threshold will be applied when approximately 200 questions have been answered. Since a diplomate need only answer 52 items a year, it will take several years to reach the target.

Items Checked for Meeting Requirements

MOC Component	Element	Compliance Requirement
Professionalism and Professional Standing	Licensure ¹	Valid and unrestricted in all states of practice
Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment	CME	At least 75 Category 1 CME in previous 3 years
	SA-CME	At least 25 of the 75 Category 1 CME must be self-assessment CME (SA-CME).
Assessment of Knowledge, Judgment, and Skill	OLA or traditional exam	Passed the most recent performance evaluation for ABR Online Longitudinal Assessment (OLA) or passed a traditional exam in the previous 5 years ²
Improvement in Medical Practice	PQI Project or Activity	Completed at least 1 PQI Project or Participatory Quality Improvement Activity in previous 3 years
	Audit	Achieved "compliant" audit status. Applies only to those selected for an audit.

¹**Medical Physics Diplomates Only:** Part 1 requires valid, unrestricted licensure if practicing in FL, HI, NY, or TX. Those with a license but practicing in other state(s) may also attest to licensure. Those without licensure must have one available attester as defined by the ABR.

²If a diplomate was meeting MOC requirements at the 2017 MOC Annual Review, then his or her Part 3 requirement was deferred until the rollout of Online Longitudinal Assessment (OLA). If he or she was NOT meeting MOC requirements at this review because he or she had not taken an MOC exam in the past 10 years, he or she will be required to take an MOC exam. Please call the ABR office for more information.

Diplomates are limited to three attempts if taking the traditional exam to satisfy Part 3 of MOC.

<https://www.theabr.org/medical-physics/maintenance-of-certification/moc-participation-guidelines>

MOC program assessment

- How does the ABR (BOG, BOT, Staff) assess the MOC program?
- How are areas of potential improvement brought to the attention of the ABR
 - ✓ Feedback, discussion at meetings
 - ✓ Some surveys (ad hoc) but mostly feedback
 - ✓ Feedback looked at closely and discussed
 - ✓ Communications with staff, board members

MOC program improvement

- How are potential improvements to the MOC program reviewed
 - How are modifications determined?
-
- ✓ Discussions at trustee and governor levels
 - ✓ Trustees have calls twice a month to discuss hot and routine topics and take immediate action where appropriate
 - ✓ Board meeting twice a year
 - ✓ Decisions made and approved

MOC program improvement

- How are modifications to the program communicated to diplomates
 - How are modifications implemented
-
- ✓ Email, ABR website, blogs, The Beam (*e-newsletter*), social media, society publications, letter sent to appropriate organizations (AAPM, CAMPEP, SDAMPP)
 - ✓ Typically a year or two later after announcement (for example, OLA—announced in 2016, implemented in 2019/2020)

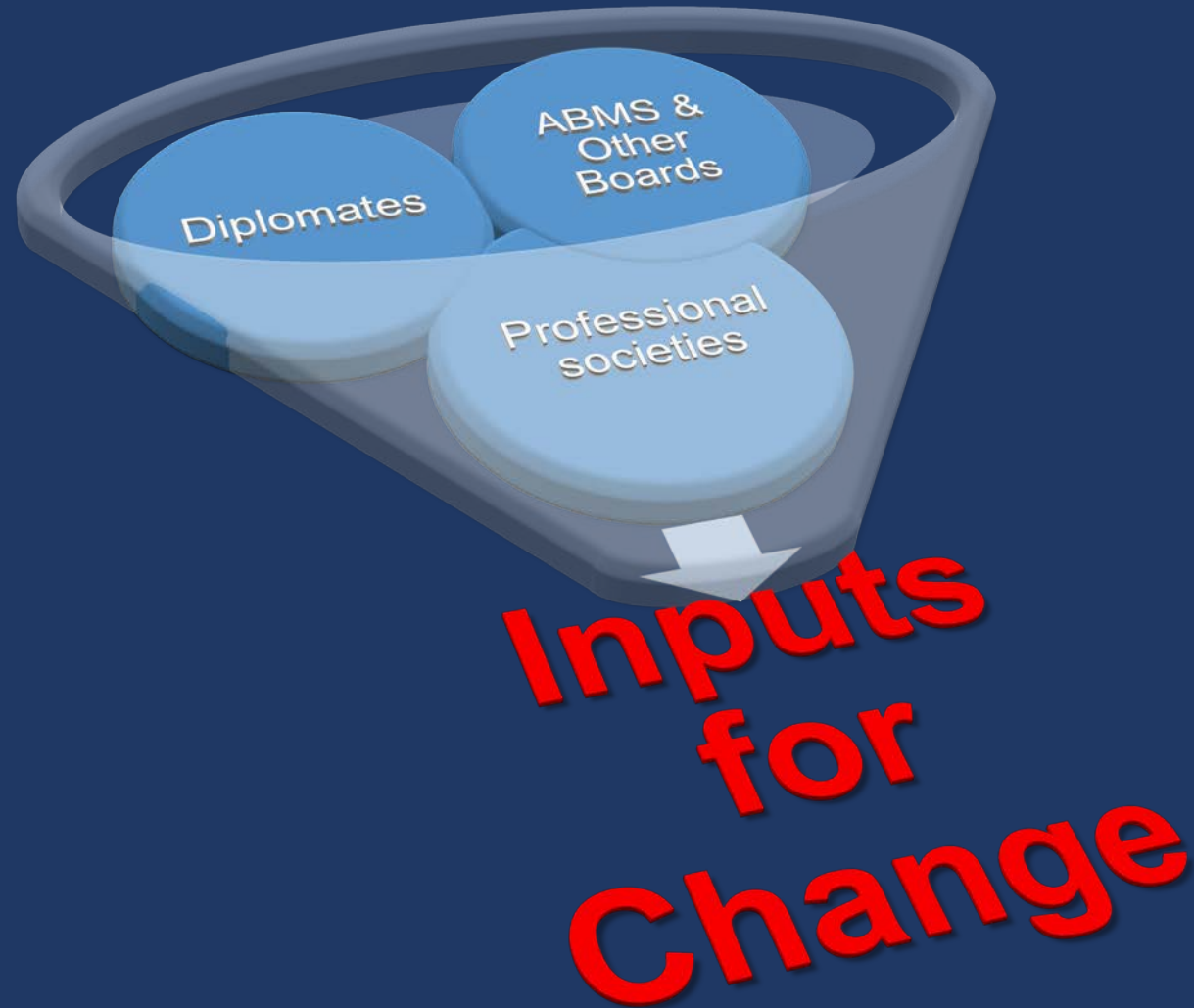
MOC program improvements

MOC IMPROVEMENTS	
2012-2020	Started issuing continuous certification
Changes made between 2007-2012, listed are significant	New annual attestation process (much easier)
	More facile
	Link to normal clinical work
	PQI changed- added more day to day activities from work
	SDEPS were added for Physicists
	SAMS to SA-CME
	Dedicated ABR staff to answer MOC questions

When does the ABR change the MOC requirements?

- When improved ways to meet the standards become evident
- When equivalent but less burdensome methods to meet the standards become available
- When required by the ABMS
- Improve the quality of the process
- Simply the process for diplomates

What other sources does the ABR consult when considering MOC changes?



Exam creation process for OLA

- Committees
- Item writing / review process
- Exam assembly

Photographs of Medical Physics Volunteers



Learning Objectives

- To understand the roles and responsibilities of ABR Medical Physics Trustees.
- To learn how the MOC program is assessed and how changes are reviewed and implemented.

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<https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-american-board-of-radiology/>



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Volunteer Opportunities with the ABR

- Eligible one year after certified
- Item writers – Written, OLA
- Oral Examiner
- Angoff committee members
- SAM reviewers
- Advisory committee members
- Board members



THANK YOU!

kkanal@uw.edu

www.theabr.org





QUESTIONS?

Please contact an ABR Certification Manager at:
information@theABR.org
or
(520) 790-2900



Audience questions not addressed during Q&A:

- **For general MOC FAQs, please see link:**
- **<https://www.theabr.org/medical-physics/maintenance-of-certification/moc-faqs>**
- **For all scoring and performance evaluation questions asked below, please refer to the ABR OLA Scoring and Performance Evaluation FAQs on the website, <https://www.theabr.org/online-longitudinal-assessment-ola#scoring-eval>**
 - What will the standard be? Only 60% passing rate like oral exam??
 - Can you give an example of what is passing? We all understand that each question is weighted. Will passing be 80%?
 - Would you consider putting an example of a criterion based test being scored on the ABR website? I think many of us are still confused by this. (Ex: three questions, the weights, and Bob's grade based on his answers).
 - Regarding scoring: Why not just publish the algorithm using standard mathematical notation? We're all physicists, we could understand that.
 - If we all answered all 100 questions and got 52 right, does that count as 100%?
 - after the first eval at 200 questions is there another eval every 200 questions or is it continuous eval after that first time
 - After answering the 200+ questions say in 2 years, will my next set of questions start immediately?
 - Since NMP diplomates only have 52 questions available per year, is there a threshold for number of questions answered incorrectly that automatically make you "not meeting MOC" If this threshold is met, is the only remedy to take the oral exam or can you continue with OLA to raise your correct answers?
- If I only answer 52 then you throw a question out, does that mean I did not do 52 questions in a year and thus not meeting eligibility?
 - *If a question that you answered is subsequently retired, it is removed from OLA scoring. You receive credit for your answer and progress toward your OLA annual progress requirement.*
- If you get every question wrong and then get the variants all correct. How does that affect scoring? Basically, do they cancel each other out?
 - *Questions that are answered incorrectly are scored as incorrect. If you answer the variant question correctly, it is scored as correct.*
- How do you ensure that the questions are valid as time goes on?
 - *All OLA questions are reviewed to ensure they are performing to the highest standards. As part of this process, all OLA question feedback is provided to the*

volunteer committee that created the question. Additionally, all OLA committees complete a regular review of the question pool to ensure the questions are valid.

- Have you ever considered providing automatic feedback to end users who submit feedback? Even if it's just that the status of the question was changed (edited for clarity, removed etc., thank you for your feedback)?
 - *An automated email is sent when OLA feedback is submitted. In addition, if a question that you have answered is retired, a message will be displayed in place of that question in your My OLA History. The message indicates that you will receive credit for your answer and progress toward your OLA annual progress requirement.*
- If you are a volunteer question writer, how is COI handled given that you have knowledge of some of the OLA questions?
 - *Unfortunately, this scenario is unavoidable. In time the question pool for each certificate area will be extremely large with most questions in the pool being written by multiple committee volunteers. Each volunteer reviews hundreds of questions and it is impossible to recall the questions and answers when answering the OLA questions.*

Asked during the session:

- If you started participating in OLA this year, when does the SAM requirement get reduced?
 - *If you meet the OLA annual participation requirement in 2020, you will see the reduction in the number of required SA-CE during your 2021 MOC annual review. This same process would repeat every year you meet the OLA progress requirement.*
- Any other bodies, beside the ABR, will be able to offer MOCs?
 - *If you are certified by the ABR, you have to satisfy ABR MOC program requirements.*
- Does the total number of CEs reduce to 65 then?
 - *To satisfy Maintenance of Certification (MOC) Part 2, the ABR requires medical physics diplomates to attain 75 CE credits in the previous three years, at least 25 of which must be credits from Self-Assessment CE (SA-CE) activities. If you meet the OLA annual participation requirement in a year, you will see the reduction in the number of required SA-CE during your next MOC annual review. The self-assessment CE (SA-CE) obligation will decrease from 25 to 15. The total number of CE credits required (75) will remain the same; only the number of SA-CE will change.*
- If a question expires is that the same as declined?
 - *No. With the exception of Nuclear Medical Physics, you receive 104 question opportunities each year. Allowing some question opportunities to expire is expected since you only need to answer 52 questions each year. A decline is used if you open a question to answer it and decide that you don't wish to answer. You*

have 10 declines each year. Check out our [blog](#) with more information on question declines.

- Is it true that failing a question in a given topic will cause the OLA system to give you more questions on that same topic?
 - *No. You only get 1 more similar question (a variant) within a month on the same topic.*
- Can you explain more about what a SAM Reviewer does and the Angoff one as well?
 - *Check out the [ABR Volunteer Manual](#) on our website for information about all the ABR volunteer opportunities.*
- Is there any drawback for answering more than 52 OLA questions a year? Should MOC participants stop answering questions in a given year once they reach the 52 question requirement?
 - *The sooner you answer 52 calibrated questions, the sooner you will have an idea of whether you are meeting the passing standard, which will be displayed on your OLA Dashboard. After you answer 200 calibrated questions, your Part 3 OLA performance will be evaluated. If you answer 104 questions per year, your OLA performance evaluation will occur in approximately 2 years. If you answer 52 questions per year, your OLA performance evaluation will occur in approximately 4 years.*
- Are there any consequences, either positive or negative, to answer more than the 52 out of 104 OLA questions per year?
 - *The sooner you answer 52 calibrated questions, the sooner you will have an idea of whether you are meeting the passing standard, which will be displayed on your OLA Dashboard. After you answer 200 calibrated questions, your Part 3 OLA performance will be evaluated. If you answer 104 questions per year, your OLA performance evaluation will occur in approximately 2 years. If you answer 52 questions per year, your OLA performance evaluation will occur in approximately 4 years.*
- Are there any accommodations for people with vision issues, ESL, or Dyslexia, etc. with timed OLA questions?
 - *The ABR has options for accommodating those with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please contact an ABR Certification Manager for more information about how to request accommodations at information@theabr.org or (520) 790-2900.*
- Is there an expectation to skip questions for specialty procedures that are less commonly seen in most clinics (Ex: Protons or Gamma knife). Could lack of day to day knowledge in these topics be enough to not maintain certification?
 - *OLA questions should be at the level of “walking-around knowledge” for all diplomates and not only those familiar with specialty procedures. While not all sites will offer all clinical procedures, common clinical procedures available at most sites may be appropriate as OLA questions. In addition, you are allowed to decline up to 10 questions each year.*

- In the OLA question review it asks if a minimally educated physicist in this area would know this answer, what does "in this area" mean specifically, Physics Practice in General, or trained in the area of the question i.e. protons?
 - *A "minimally competent physicist with training in this area" means training in the general practice of medical physics in the areas of radiation therapy, diagnostic radiology or nuclear medicine, and not training in subfields of those areas.*
- Thank you for the update. The ABR medical physics oral exam was canceled early on due to COVID-19 concerns, what about ABR Part 1 and Part 2 exams? Will they be postponed?
 - *As of now, ABR Part 1 and Part 2 are scheduled for August 2020. No changes have yet been made to these exam dates. For up to date information on COVID-19, please refer to [coronavirus information page](#) on the ABR website.*
- Can you please provide an update on what the status is for part 3 oral exam candidates and when they can expect to sit for the 2020 exam? Thank you.
 - *The MP Part 3 (Oral) is now scheduled to be held on October 24-27 in Tucson, AZ. For up to date information on COVID-19, please refer to the [coronavirus information page](#) on the ABR website.*
- Why not share the blueprint publicly?
 - *There is no published study material for OLA questions. Volunteer exam committee members are encouraged to create questions at the level of "walking-around knowledge" from references common in the general practice of medical physics. A review of the references cited for OLA questions already viewed may provide an indication of the level and type of references used by the OLA committees. Blog link: <https://www.theabr.org/blogs/walking-around-knowledge-what-is-it> Walking around knowledge encompasses a wide area of topics.*
- Can you comment on "lifetime" certified? Because I am over 70, I want my clients to know that I understand my level of expertise. Why is it difficult to let ABR answer your status and report certification?
 - *The ABR website lists all certified medical physicists regardless of MOC participation. There was an issue a few months ago with the CRCPD QMP registry, which only showed physicists participating in MOC and not lifetime certificate holders who were not participating in MOC. That issue should now be resolved.*

General Comments:

- I LOVE OLA. I do them as quickly as possible.
- Great talk Dr. Kanal - Amen for the need for MOC! I wish I had a permanent photographic memory & could recall info from Grad School 20+ years ago! Thanks so much! Kevin D.