Introduction
Osteopathic Continuous Certification (OCC) was initiated January 1, 2013. OCC now replaces the recertification program that was instituted in 2003. The OCC program in internal medicine and its subspecialties is developed by the American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine for certified internists and subspecialists. The objectives of the program are to promote and verify academic and professional excellence over a Diplomate’s lifetime of practice, to set standards of clinical competence for the practice of osteopathic internal medicine and to improve the quality of patient care. Since the pool of candidates entering the OCC process are a select group who have previously demonstrated their scholarly excellence, it is anticipated that the design of the OCC program will assure that almost all of the diplomates will be able to successfully revalidate their certificates. Certificates in internal medicine or a subspecialty issued prior to 1993 are not time-limited and therefore are valid for life. OCC is voluntary for diplomates with lifetime certificates. Failure to pass the OCC secure examination by diplomates with lifetime certificates will have no effect on the diplomates existing certificate. Diplomates may apply for entry into the process of OCC at any time after initial certification or recertification but continuous activity in OCC is required to maintain certification. The only prerequisite for OCC is that the diplomate must have been previously certified by the AOBIM in the area(s) in which they seek OCC. The OCC program will allow diplomates to maintain their certification in several disciplines concurrently, i.e., internal medicine and subspecialty. OCC in the subspecialties listed in I.F.,2.(Policies and Procedures) do not require OCC in internal medicine, but OCC in Addiction Medicine, Correctional Medicine, Geriatric Medicine and Sports Medicine requires the Diplomate to possess a valid certificate in Internal Medicine. OCC in Critical Care Medicine, Hospice and Palliative Medicine, Pain Medicine, Sleep Medicine and Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine requires OCC in the underlying discipline for which original eligibility for the examination was established. Certificates become invalid when the requirements for OCC are not met.

Entry into the OCC Process
Diplomates may enter the process by registering on line at www.occ-ecim.org, submitting the OCC registration fee and completing the application on-line.

Requirements of OCC in a Subspecialty or Added Qualifications for those with certificates expiring prior to 2018.

In order to complete the OCC process by the AOA through the American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine, the applicant must satisfactorily complete all of the following minimum requirements:

1. Register online at www.aobim.org for the OCC (recertification) subspecialty or Added Qualifications examination, print the application, attach passport size photo and submit the application along with items 2-6 below to the AOBIM office prior to the deadline of April 1 or late application deadline of May 1. Note that two registrations are required: the registration for OCC at www.occ-ecim.org and registration at www.aobim.org for the secure examination under the heading “Recertification (OCC)”.

2. The applicant must complete fifty (50) credit hours of internal medicine continuing medical education (CME) during the 36 month period prior to the secure examination. CME that can be specifically identified as internal medicine will apply, including on-site courses, self-study courses, on-line credits, etc. Credits do not have to be in the 1-A category. Osteopathic teaching is applicable up to a maximum of 25 hours. Submit copies of the AOA CME Activity Report that lists the credit hours completed along with the application. The Review Course will count toward the 50 hours of CME.

3. Copy of the State Medical license that is active, valid, unchallenged and unrestricted to practice medicine in all states where the applicant currently holds a license.

4. The applicant must show satisfactory competence in clinical practice in the field being examined. This process will be determined predominantly by verification provided by the applicant's local medical peers. This documentation will be provided by the Chief Medical Officer at the location of the applicant's principal clinical practice. A specific form to verify clinical competence is supplied by the Board on the website by clicking on the dropdown Application Materials. The form may be returned with the application or be returned to the Board by the medical authority completing the form. Verification of clinical competence will include components common to all applicants and also components that specifically address the type of clinical practice carried out by the applicant. The applicant will be responsible for including on the verification form the specific components of his or her clinical practice according to
the directions included within the application packet.

5. Completion of 30 points of Self-Assessment modules in Internal Medicine topics of which a minimum of 9 points must be in the area being examined. **Print the documentation of the 30 points from your OCC website dashboard and submit the copy with your application.** The entire 30 points may be from Self-Assessment modules or a combination of Self-Assessment and Practice Performance Modules. Refer to the OCC Program Description for details.

6. Submit a check or money order in the amount of $450 if applying by April 1 or $550 if applying between April 2 and May 1. The postmark on the application envelope is used as the effective date.

7. The applicant must be a member in good standing of the AOA or of the Canadian Osteopathic Association at the time of application and at the time the OCC process is completed. This will be verified by the AOBIM.

8. The applicant must be able to show evidence of conformity to the standards set in the Code of Ethics of the AOA if requested. This documentation will be included as a part of the form completed by the Chief Medical Officer.

9. The applicant must be previously certified or recertified by the AOBIM in the subspecialty or added qualifications.

10. Following satisfactory compliance with the above prescribed requirements the applicant is required to pass the secure examination.

**Secure Examination**

The subspecialty examinations will be a computer-based exam administered at the 300 Prometric testing sites and will be comprised of 100-150 items.

**Completion of OCC in More Than One Area**

For those individuals who are certified in a subspecialty the opportunity will be given for simultaneous completion of OCC in multiple areas in which a diplomate holds a certificate. The diplomate who elects to complete more than one subspecialty OCC process concurrently will complete the secure cognitive examinations on the same day and must complete all of the requirements listed above for each of the examinations. However if completing the internal medicine OCC process and subspecialty OCC process the examinations are given on two different days. For simultaneous OCC the examination score for each discipline will be computed separately. If the candidate fails one examination but passes the other(s), the candidate will be required to sit for the entire examination that was failed at the next annual examination date. For all examinations, the AOBIM uses an absolute standard (which permits everyone to pass) for passing and candidates must exceed a specific level of performance to obtain a passing score.

**Date, Location and Time of Examination**

The subspecialty secure cognitive examinations will be administered on August 29, 2017, at the Prometric computer examination sites. The subspecialty secure examinations will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at noon. If taking two examinations the second exam will be given starting at 1:00 p.m. All candidates must report to the examination room no later than 7:30 a.m. Upon receipt of a complete application the candidate will receive an email notification with instructions on how to register for an examination site with Prometric.

**Application Fees and Deadline**

The application/examination fee is $450 for subspecialty and must be submitted with the application. The completed application must be postmarked no later than April 1, 2017. An additional late fee of $100 will be added to all applications postmarked after April 1, 2017. No applications will be accepted after May 1, 2017 and any applications submitted as incomplete must have all requirements completed by June 1. All applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their application within 30 days of receipt of the completed application and all required documentation. The examination fees for the conjoint examinations will vary. Please refer to the AOBIM website or AOA website for examination fees and deadlines.

**Refunds and Withdrawals**

There is a non-refundable cancellation fee of $100 for all withdrawals. All withdrawals must be in writing and submitted to the AOBIM office by mail or e-mail no later than August 27, 2017.
Instructions for Completing the Application Packet

Please read all of the website information under Recertification (OCC) on the dropdown Subspecialty Recert Directions and Information and click on the link Submission Instructions for Subspecialty Recertification. All of the items on the registration/application form must be filled out completely or the application will not be accepted. The application form must be printed online and submitted along with all supporting documents via postal mail to the AOBIM.

Acknowledgment of Acceptance

All candidates whose applications have been accepted will be notified within four (4) weeks of receipt of the completed application and all supporting documents. Each subspecialty accepted candidate will be sent an email verifying receipt of the completed application along with instructions on how to register for an exam site with Prometric.

Results

The Diplomates will be informed of the results of the examination within 60 days following the examination date. Those who passed the examination will receive a Certificate which will attest that the Board is satisfied that the Diplomate is clinically competent to perform in the areas in which they actually practice. The certificate will be time-limited and expire 10 years from the date of issuance. The date of issuance of the certificate will be the date of examination or the expiration date of the corresponding valid certificate whichever is later. The actual receipt of the certificate will not occur until six months after the examination issuance date. This certification will be awarded after the Bureau of Osteopathic Specialists gives final approval of the examination process for each candidate. This approval process will take approximately six months following the notification of successful completion of the examination. On written request and payment of a fee of $200, candidates may obtain review of their computer scoring results within one month of receiving the results. The electronic candidate scoring data will be deleted 24 months following the examination date.

Failure to Pass the Examination

If a candidate fails the overall subspecialty examination, the re-examination will be given during the next annual examination. If a candidate fails the re-examination two consecutive times, the candidate will be required to reapply and complete all of the requirements for OCC. A candidate will be considered in the process of completing OCC during this period of time. Diplomates may have an unlimited number of annual examination attempts. The OCC application is valid for three years. After three years, the Diplomate must re-apply and complete the OCC process.

Valid Dates of Certificates for Early Completion of the OCC Program.

The OCC requirements and secure examination may be taken up to two (2) years prior to the expiration date of the current certificate. When all components of the recertification program have been completed a new ten (10) year certificate valid from the date of the examination or the date of the existing certificate, whichever is later, will be issued. The certificate will not be printed until shortly after the expiration of the existing valid certificate.

Address Changes

Registered candidates must notify the Board office, in writing, of any change in address after entering the recertification process. If a certificate is not received by the Diplomate as a result of not notifying the Board in writing of the change of address, the fee for the reprinting will be the responsibility of the Diplomate.

Preparation for the Examination

Although a review course(s) may help prepare the Diplomate to pass the OCC secure (recertification) examination it may well not be adequate enough preparation in order to successfully pass the examination. The Board strongly recommends that every Diplomate undertake a self-study and self-assessment program in addition to the requirements listed above, as part of the recertification process.

Submission of Applications: All applications are to be submitted to:

American Osteopathic Board of Internal Medicine
142 E. Ontario Street
Chicago, IL  60611