



**Optometric Board Certification Model
Answers to
Frequently Asked Questions
of the
Joint Board Certification
Project Team**

- 31. Q:** If the AOA House of Delegates vote is "Yes," is there any further opportunity for input on the final model for Board Certification?
- A:** The Joint Board Certification Project Team has developed a “model” for a board certification process. While the model has some detail, even more detail will need to be developed before board certification could begin in earnest. If the AOA House of Delegates accepts the model, the process would become the responsibility of the American Board of Optometry. That organization should accept input from the profession as final details are developed prior to implementation of the plan.
- 32. Q:** If the house vote is "No" at the AOA House of Delegates, will the issue of "BC" die?
- A:** The issues of competence and board certification have surfaced many times in the past, at least once every decade for the past 40 years. As the U.S. health care system continues to evolve, there will likely be ever-increasing demands on the profession of optometry to have a process to demonstrate ongoing competence in a manner such as board certification and maintenance of certification. The AOA will not support board certification should it be defeated in the AOA House of Delegates.
- 33. Q:** Is there a game plan to come up with initial funding to get this off the ground? (\$2 million has been quoted). Our AOA affiliate members will be asking as they will be fearful of the dues increase or special assessments.
- A:** Along with other organizations, the AOA could be one of the "funding entities" to finance the startup of the American Board of Optometry. Any funding plan involving the AOA would be in the form of a loan with interest, so it would not affect dues.

34. Q: Why do the residency and the Academy fellowship points only apply if they have been completed in the last 10 years? An accredited residency is an accredited residency no matter when it was completed. The same can be asked about AAO. Why is there a limited value on having passed AAO last year vs. more than 10 yrs ago?

A: This was discussed and debated extensively by the JBCPT. Our model for board certification and maintenance of certification is based largely on that of the American Board of Family Medicine and other member boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties. Nearly all of their programs have time limits of ten years, so the JBCPT believes that a similar ten-year sunset for residencies and fellowship is a reasonable one. The premise used by other organizations is that the currency of residency or any formal training program becomes stale over time.

35. Q: I would want to know specifically what happens if HOD votes no, since there are many other agencies involved. Will the other agencies continue to carry the torch?

A: The leadership of all the participating organizations saw the wisdom in working together with all stakeholders in optometry to study this issue. While it is thought that the decision of the AOA House of Delegates is crucial to this decision, it is possible that another group either inside or outside of optometry could move forward with a board certification process.

36. Q: Does the AOA have an official position regarding adoption of the JBCPT recommendations?

A: Like the rest of the profession, the AOA Board of Trustees saw the final product when it was released by the JBCPT in January. The Board will make the formal motion that will begin and allow discussion by the AOA House of Delegates. The motion will likely recommend support of the model as well as recommend that any newly formed entity obtain significant input from the profession before any final process is rolled out.

37. Q: Was what we heard at the President's Council the final program or will it be further modified before the House of Delegates in Washington, DC?

A: The model released by the JBCPT could be modified further by the Project Team, before being voted on by each of the organizations. It will certainly be further refined and developed by the American Board of Optometry if the process moves forward. Issues that arise through the presentation of the model to the profession should be forwarded to the JBCPT for consideration.

38. Q: Who funded the activities of the Joint Board Certification Project Team?

A: The six organizations that comprise the JBCPT have been responsible for funding their representatives to the team. In addition, the organizations have made contributions to cover the non-travel-related costs of meetings of the project team.

39. Q: How will members of the American Board of Optometry be selected?

A: The JBCPT has recommended that the Organizing Board include one member of the sitting Joint Board Certification Project Team from each participating organization in order to retain the institutional knowledge of that group, and in addition, one additional member should be appointed by the American Optometric Association.

40. Q: Has the proposed plan been presented to nationally-recognized certifying organizations or government entities?

A: The accreditation of optometric board certification will be in the auspices of the American Board of Optometry if the process moves forward. The JBCPT feels strongly that it would be presumptuous of the project team to formally consult with national certifying organizations prior to the profession deciding to proceed. Such consultation could result in a mandate to proceed with certification that could be prejudicial to our debate and discussion.