Medical Physicist Certification in Canada

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CCPM History

- Founded in 1979
- Membership: certification of competence
- Fellowship: excellence and leadership
- Recertification process was added in 2001
- Oral exam for membership started in 2004
- Currently 369 medical physicists certified by CCPM, 38% are Fellows

CCPM Mandate

As summarized from the CCPM Bylaws:

- Identify competent persons who are responsible for applications of physics in medicine
- Identify individuals demonstrating excellence in the practice of medical physics
- Promote knowledge and disseminate information related to medical physics.

Division of responsibilities COMP/CCPM

Clarification of Mandates:

- CCPM: run an excellent certification process
- COMP: serve its members through a broad range of activities appropriate to a professional association
Certification in Canada

- Medical physics is not a regulated profession in any province (yet), so certification is not required by law (no licensure or registration)
- Most employers require certification as a condition of employment, for salary progression, or provide a bonus or salary increment
- Certification is increasingly seen as essential -- marks appropriate qualification of staff for institutional or program accreditation

Overview of CCPM Certification Process

- 4 sub-specialties:
  - Radiation Oncology (86%)
  - Nuclear Medicine
  - Diagnostic Radiological
  - MRI

- Two levels of certification:
  - Membership: Certification of competence (228)
    - Credential review, written and oral exams
  - Fellowship: Demonstrated excellence (141)
    - Credential review and oral exam

Cumulative Growth of CCPM Membership

- 2002: Recertification started
- 2004: Oral exam added

Percentage of clinical COMP members who are certified, by province

Certification includes MCCPM, FCCPM, ABR, ABMP, and other. Denominator includes all COMP members deemed to be in a clinical position and potentially eligible for certification.
Number of COMP and CCPM members by province

COMP and CCPM membership per capita of population

Annual health care spending per capita

COMP and CCPM membership by provincial health care spending

Per capita provincial government health care spending, Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), 2010
Ratio of AAPM membership to COMP membership by province

**A Tale of Two Provinces**

**Ontario**
- Population: 13.2 M
- Radiation oncology medical physicists: 126
- 9.5 radonc physicists per million

**Quebec**
- Population: 7.9 M
- Radiation oncology medical physicists: 93
- 11.8 radonc physicists per million

**Conclusions**
- Across Canada, medical physicist certification is strong and well established
- Rates of certification are lower in some provinces (notably SK and QC)
- Salary structure is a strong incentive for certification
- Certification in imaging sub-specialties is an issue