Dear colleagues,

David Skorton, MD, AAMC president and CEO, spoke this morning (May 6) to Peter Katsufrakis, MD, MBA, president and CEO of the NBME. During their conversation, Dr. Skorton provided direct feedback to Dr. Katsufrakis related to concerns the AAMC is hearing from its members of the Council of Deans, Group on Student Affairs, and the Organization of Student Representatives regarding the increasingly untenable situation caused by the closing of Prometric sites and the subsequent cancellation and rescheduling of USMLE exams. Dr. Skorton recognized that both organizations have a shared priority to protect the safety and well-being of our medical students and that we share their desire to protect the standardization of testing and the integrity of the USMLE, as well as the need to maintain equity in access.

Following the conversation, Dr. Skorton sent a follow-up communication to NBME’s CEO to express specific concerns raised by the communities noted above. Concerns noted included, but were not limited to:

- Prometric cancellations may create two unequal cohorts within a given medical school class, in which half of the class will be able to take the exam as scheduled in June, and the other half either will be rescheduled to a later date or are currently unable to confirm a test date.
- The disruption may unduly affect students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who have already been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic as these students have less access to resources needed to continue studying for the exam or to travel to more distant sites if the sites closest to them remain closed.
- The Prometric cancellation and rescheduling process is still unclear.
- When students contact Prometric, members have stated Prometric employees have reportedly provided inconsistent or incorrect information or have directed examinees back to the NBME for information.
- Students have reported receiving email communications with confirmation of dates that were never chosen, leaving students to question whether they were unknowingly rescheduled or if the email was a mistake. Other students have reported receiving mixed messages with an initial email indicating a test date cancellation, followed by another email confirming that same date.
- Students with approved testing accommodations whose test dates were cancelled have reported being asked to manage their scheduling by phone, only to find that the Prometric phone system is shut down.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the most difficult situation it has created for medical education, Dr. Skorton asked the NBME to consider the following:

- Re-consider the announced date of June 30 for identifying a solution. Our members have shared that even if a decision is reached to allow event testing at that time, medical schools will need additional time to prepare their locations to proctor the exam according to NBME standards, further delaying exam dates for students.
- Share more detailed information with the community about how the cancellation and rescheduling process will proceed.
- Share more detailed information with the community about how the NBME is addressing the challenges associated with communications with examinees.
• Offer a decision regarding permission for medical schools to administer USMLE exams on campus by May 15th, along with detailed requirements for exam administration.
• Provide clarification to the community about the protocol for cleaning of Prometric testing facilities and materials as well as the protocols for social distancing during exams.
• Have NBME representatives available to participate in the next GSA community call.

I hope you find this communication helpful as you provide support and guidance to, and advocacy for, your medical students.

Best regards,

Geoff

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