

August 12, 2021

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Colleagues:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine (AACPM), I am writing to express the Association's opposition to the ***Joint Task Force of Orthopaedic Surgeons and Podiatric Surgeons - White Paper Improving the Standardization Process for Assessment of Podiatric Medical Students and Residents by Enabling Them to Take the USMLE*** written in support of AMA Resolution 303 (Jun-21). We request that the White Paper be rescinded until there is an opportunity for evaluation and discussion with College Deans. We do acknowledge the hard work and dedication of those involved with this initiative and believe all were guided by the best of intentions. We do not wish to interject on the politics of House of Delegate policies and procedures, but rather opine as the educational arm of the profession and comment as follows.

Specifically, the Association has significant legitimate concerns regarding the following:

- Although Vision 2015 discussed the pathway of podiatric students taking the USMLE, it was only one of many options discussed during the project. Since that time, no one from the Association leadership, its individual member institutions, College Deans, Curriculum Committees, certifying Boards, residency programs or residency faculty were consulted about the adequacy of the current medical school or graduate training curriculum and the impact of what changes would be required to prepare students and graduates to pass all three steps of the USMLE prior to the publication of the White Paper.
- We take exception to the concept outlined in the White Paper that the only way for doctors of podiatric medicine to be considered physicians is to pass the USMLE, a licensing exam sequence for another discipline, which would require to adequately instruct and prepare students to sit for, massive changes in the curriculum to the point where it would be unrecognizable as a specialized podiatric medical curriculum. Allopathic medical doctors could not pass the APMLE, why should podiatric medical doctors take the USMLE? Having two testing sequences will create a bifurcated profession of podiatric physicians who have

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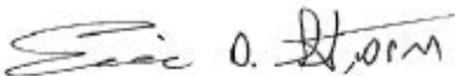
taken the USMLE and those who have not. What happens to those DPMs fully licensed by APMLE, who have heretofore had successful practices once hospital credentialing bodies and insurance panels accept only those “USMLE DPMs”? We are concerned that the language in the White Paper, now a public document, can and will be used against the profession as a self-admission that our education is inferior. We cannot take that language back.

- Physician status was achieved by the Osteopathic Community without a USMLE requirement. In fact, the COMLEX exam provides adequate assurance that their education is equivalent and adequate to “protect the public”. We believe that the education and training in Podiatric medical schools, residency programs, and passage of three parts of the APMLE, coupled with our rigorous board certification process, also affords the “public protection”, and based on that we should be considered Physicians within our scope of practice. Like our Osteopathic colleagues we need to retain the option to win this right legislatively.

The Association is not opposed to ongoing discussions and negotiations with the ACFAS and APMA, or even continued dialogue with AAOS and AOFAS. The critical component for the future is consensus within the profession prior to moving forward. As the organization representing the educational community, we request a seat at the table when the deliberations regarding the future direction of the profession are taking place.

AACPM looks forward to the conversation and I look forward to your response.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric D. Stamps". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Eric D. Stamps, DPM

cc: AACPM Board of Directors