

On May 11, the Coalition for Physician Accountability – a cross-organizational group of national medical education organizations, of which NRMP collaborated as a planning group member – released its report and recommendations, *Medical Education Institutions of LCME-Accredited, U.S. Osteopathic, and Non-U.S. Medical School Applicants*, covering three major issues that applicants and training programs are facing as they prepare for the 2020-21 residency cycle during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Away rotations
2. In-person interviews for residency
3. ERAS timeline

To develop the recommendations, the Coalition convened a work group whose participants featured diversity of thought and represented the full spectrum of stakeholders across medical education and the public. The work group established guiding principles for considering these important issues:

- **The safety of patients, learners and our community remain paramount.**
- **Medical students and residents need to meet requirements for graduation and accreditation.**
- **The residency selection process should remain as equitable as possible; and**
- **There needs to be a concerted effort to reduce anxiety and promote well-being for all in an already stressed system.**

**These recommendations are intended to add to, but not supersede, the independent judgment of a medical school, sponsoring institution, or residency program regarding the immediate needs of its patients and preparation of its learners.** However, as students rely upon predictable, common practices across schools and programs as they prepare to transition to residency, a consistent approach to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic will greatly reduce unnecessary confusion, stress, and inequity among students, and promote a more successful residency selection process for all.

These recommendations considered the current environment, future forecasts, the subject matter expertise and the perspectives of those closest to the issues. However, releasing these recommendations is merely the first step. It will take the medical education community working together to create the best solutions for all stakeholders. Since the arrival of COVID-19, the community has experienced many challenges; but in the face of those challenges, it has shown great courage, resilience, flexibility, and creativity.

We have witnessed how medical students have come together to develop opportunities to support their future colleagues in the clinical environment. We have seen how the medical administration and faculty have come up with innovative ways to adjust curricula while maintaining its rigor. And we have seen how specialties, programs, and hospitals have adjusted to ensure the safety of applicants and to support their well-being during this critical time in their academic careers.

We are impressed with the creative solutions coming from program director associations and medical schools, and we appreciate the collaborative approaches all are taking. As we move forward, we will need these continued efforts of all stakeholders, bringing your commitment, innovative ideas, and flexibility to promote consistency and fairness across the country for applicants and programs alike.

We look forward to working with each of you as we continue to navigate the changes in medical education and helping share your innovations and promising approaches.

Best,

Donna L. Lamb, DHSc, MBA, BSN  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Resident Matching Program