

## 5/1/2020 – Class of 2021 Updates

Dear students,

We want to give you a couple updates, including what we know about Step 2 exams and resuming in-person rotations.

We want to remind students that you will receive an 'Incomplete' grade in end-of-year clerkships for which you have not yet had the clinical portion. This grade will be converted to 'Pass' after you complete the clinical time (and pass the clinical evaluation and subject exam).

We know you all are frustrated with the current status of Step exam scheduling. Please know that those of us in Upstate leadership are frustrated with this situation along with you, and we continue to work to try to improve things for you.

NBME released an announcement earlier today that has some useful information and links to an FAQ page with answers to questions we know several of you have asked.

<http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?m=1114651212823&ca=e9253f6e-5411-4101-b827-67ab69eac5cd>

<https://www.usmle.org/frequently-asked-questions/#covid19>

Just this afternoon, we heard some good news from the USMLE:

"We have several efforts underway to deliver supplemental testing and accelerate our publicly stated timeline to provide a solution. We are exploring remote proctoring, delivery at alternate sites (including medical schools), and additional solutions to resume testing and to address testing backlog and capacity constraints. We have incorporated the suggestions and ideas we have received from medical students, medical school faculty, state medical boards, and our partners in this work, and will seek to partner even more closely with medical schools as we move forward with implementation. We expect to have better insight on feasible alternatives and associated requirements within the next week."

As of now, Prometric does not list any NY sites in their list of open testing sites. We don't know when they will open or what criteria will be used to determine whether individual sites can be open or not.

We are aware that some students have gotten emails stating their exam was canceled because the testing center is closed. The NBME has announced that "all bulk cancellations for May appointments resulting from social distancing requirements and center closures are complete. State and local guidelines are evolving rapidly, and cancellations may still occur for May appointments if a testing center's ability to open changes. If examinees do not receive a cancellation email from Prometric, their examination appointment is proceeding as scheduled."

Many of you who had your exams canceled have not been able to reschedule your exam in time to get a score before the current ERAS application release date (9/15/2020). We are optimistic that the ERAS application release date will be delayed a month or more to give

students additional time to get everything done before they apply to residency, but there are still no new updates about this.

If USMLE figures out a way for schools to administer the Step 2 CK exam, we can assure you that we will jump at that opportunity. We have added our voices and signatures to many others requesting this option. Unfortunately, we have to wait for USMLE to act (and we realize that it is a very complicated process to change the administration of an internationally-used licensing exam). For now, we are happy that their announcement today said they will let us know more "within the next week."

Regarding Step 2 CS, USMLE said, "We are dedicated to finding a testing solution for Step 2CS that assures the safety of examinees and standardized patients as our top priority. We have a dedicated team exploring innovative and disruptive solutions to resume Step 2CS Examinations. This includes options that alleviate your students' need to travel to examination centers. We expect to have more news next week."

With regard to 4th year clinical electives and AIs at Upstate, we are still hoping to be able to start with Block 1 on May 26. We received this update today from senior leadership regarding all students at Upstate:

"Deans, faculty and staff are working on a staged resumption of student clinical rotations. We must address the adequacy of PPE, student safety, which clinical services have capacity and how much, student education regarding COVID, adequate testing, and others. It is possible that some rotations could start as early as the last week of May but most will resume in July and thereafter. Rotations for students enrolled in Upstate programs will be addressed before accepting learners from other programs. We will keep you informed as the plan evolves."

We have been encouraged thus far by the majority of clinical services saying that if students are appropriately prepared and protected to be in patient care settings, they expect to have sufficient educational opportunities for them.

To help our students be prepared to care for patients and practice medicine amid the challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, we are putting together an online COVID course. Students will need to complete this course prior to returning to the clinical setting. We think it would be incredibly valuable for students to contribute to the design of this course, ensuring that the content chosen is the most relevant and high yield for you and your classmates. Any fourth-year student who is interested in helping with the development and implementation of this course, please contact Dr. Lesperance or me.

We will continue to monitor the exam situation, which continues to evolve. We are enlisting the help of some of your classmates to monitor Step exam information from NBME, USMLE, and Prometric, as well as your concerns and suggestions, and to help transmit information back to you

We look forward to speaking with you next Wednesday at 5 pm at the weekly town hall meeting. We hope that these updates are helpful to you and that you enjoy your weekend!

Take care and be well,

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