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The Liaison Committee of the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners (NBOME) held a meeting in Chicago on June 7, 2015. Representatives from the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), the Student Osteopathic Medical Association, Council of Osteopathic Student Government Presidents, AOA Council of Interns and Residents, Association of Osteopathic Directors of Medical Education and Federation of State Medical Boards attended the meeting providing updates and discussing topics of mutual interest. The NBOME provided an update on its clinical skills assessment products for osteopathic physicians, citing its mission to assure competency in practice and protect the public. Discussion occurred on how curriculum development within testing helps guide faculty at the medical schools.

The Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Achievement Test (COMAT) is now used in virtually every college of osteopathic medicine (COM). The seven core clinical disciplines are tested, and each individual is tested on surgery, pediatrics, ob-gyn, psychiatry, family medicine and internal medicine at the end of clerkship/clinical rotations. Testing on emergency medicine rotations is scheduled to be added in the near future. The Committee also discussed whether the COMAT may help standardize curriculum of COMs across the nation.

AACOM reported there are 31 osteopathic colleges, 25,000 medical students, 4,800 graduates and 32,000 faculty members. There is no law to restrict the opening of medical schools since one cannot restrict trade, unlike hospitals, which must get a Certificate of Need in some states. The use of scores from the Comprehensive Osteopathic Medical Licensing Examination continues to rise, with 84% of programs accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education using these scores as one factor for acceptance. During the 2015 match, over 99% of COM graduates successfully placed into a graduate medical education program. There are 5,229 new physicians beginning their postgraduate training and only 0.59% of medical students have not matched.

The Committee also discussed the current expansion of medical schools. New osteopathic schools are opening, with the Ohio Heritage COM opening a Cleveland campus in partnership with the Cleveland Clinic-the first class of 50 students began in July of 2015. The New York Institute of Technology is opening a campus in Arkansas under the direction of Barbara Ross-Lee, DO. Kansas City University College of Osteopathic Medicine is opening a new campus with 150 seats in Joplin, MO. A new school in New Mexico recently broke ground, and a COM based at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, TX is scheduled to matriculate students in 2017. This equals to about 600 additional osteopathic students. The allopathic world is also opening about 600 new seats, which will exceed the approximately 1,100 new residency slots.

This Committee meeting was very informative. It provided a broad overview of how the osteopathic medical profession plays an important role in promoting public health safety via education and competency testing. All these stakeholders work with state licensing boards in developing the best applicants for future licensure.

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