AMA COVID-19 response: Meeting the needs of the medical education community

A message from Susan Skochelak, MD, MPH

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the way we treat patients and educate future physicians. I am proud of the role the American Medical Association and our colleagues across the medical education continuum have played in leading an agile, collaborative response to these educational disruptions.

Below is a brief look at our contributions to the pandemic response, born from the work of the AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Consortium and other AMA experts. I am hopeful you will find elements or ideas beneficial to your ongoing efforts to respond and rebuild from this crisis.

As you look toward the future, we are here to support you in those efforts. Be in touch, let us hear and understand your needs and let us know how AMA can continue to assist you.

Until then, be well, stay safe and thank you for all you are doing to protect the nation’s health.

Susan E. Skochelak, MD, MPH Chief academic officer and group vice president, Medical Education,
Keeping educators informed

Webinars addressing COVID-19’s impact on medical education

The rapid change in education during the pandemic required new guidance and thinking. The AMA answered this need by increasing the cadence of our “Innovations in Medical Education” webinar series and amplifying the voices of experts in MedEd. The webinars cover topics including preparing for a new residency cycle and clerkships in the world of COVID-19, structural racism and telemedicine.

AMA MedEd COVID-19 resource guide

The AMA has collated medical education resources, including external and internal updates and statements, in a centralized location to assist our educators, residents and students in keeping track of new information. This resource also includes links to an online community discussion forum, in which educators share questions and resources, and links to multiple news stories featuring input from our expert educators to amplify key issues.

Providing steadfast leadership

Guides for practicing in the pandemic

With the emergence of COVID-19, many students and residents were thrown into unfamiliar situations and asked to navigate challenges on the fly. The AMA created multiple guides to protect students and residents during the pandemic, including:

- Principles to protect medical students responding to COVID-19
- Practical guidance for restoring clinical rotations for medical students (PDF)
- Guiding principles to protect resident and fellow physicians responding to COVID-19
- Guidance for international medical graduates

Collaboration and community amid crisis

The AMA has supported conversation, reflection and collaboration across the medical education continuum through ongoing online community discussions and weekly office hours which have
addressed the disruptive influence of COVID-19 and maintaining medical education during the pandemic. In addition, senior leaders from the AMA medical education team also serve on the Coalition for Physician Accountability (CPA)—a collaboration among national organizations responsible for the accreditation, assessment, licensure and certification of physicians throughout their medical career. Through this collaboration the AMA is assisting in developing recommendations on issues including adjustments to the residency selection process, maintaining standards, and quality and training concerns during a time of greater flexibility in licensure regulations.

Visit the AMA medical education COVID-19 resource guide for a full list of the CPA’s recommendations and resources in response to the pandemic.

3 ways the AMA makes learning easier

During this time of crisis, here are some ways the AMA is expanding access to educational content:

AMA GME Competency Education Program

The AMA is assisting residency programs in adjusting their educational practices to take advantage of access to AMA GME Competency Education Program modules. This series of online educational modules is designed to complement teachings in residency and fellowship programs and includes a robust library of coursework to help residents and their institutions meet core competency requirements. The program’s six free modules are available through the end of 2020 and cover physician health, patient safety, working with an interprofessional team and other relevant topics.

Health Systems Science Learning Series modules

The AMA Health System Science Learning Series, which consists of 13 open-access online modules, provides medical students with an understanding of how health care is delivered, how professionals work together and how health systems can improve patient care.

Health Systems Science textbook


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This textbook provides a framework for teaching and learning health systems science as part of undergraduate medical education curriculum. The second edition of the Health Systems Science textbook was released in May and now includes a chapter illustrating key principles of health systems science applicable to a pandemic and physician training.

As you continue to respond to the educational disruptions related to COVID-19, please let us know how the AMA can help you move forward with recovery and address ongoing and future challenges. Email us at changemeded@ama-assn.org and let’s start the conversation now.