



THE AMERICAN ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION®

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**The AOA's Council of Orthopaedic Residency Directors (CORD)  
Position Statement on Delaying Step 1 Exam Timing  
April 2019**

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To Respected Deans of US Medical Schools:

It has come to our attention that a number of US Medical Schools have decided to delay taking Part 1 of the USMLE for their students. This decision has implications related to medical student applications to both visiting Sub-Internship rotations as well as the likelihood of matching into an Orthopaedic Surgery residency program. While we understand the discussions that went into this change, the downstream impact for your students interested in a variety of competitive fields of medicine may suffer. The American Orthopaedic Association's Council of Orthopaedic Residency Directors respectfully requests further discussions before this becomes more widespread.

The process that US medical students undertake to match in Orthopaedic Surgery is rigorous. Delay of board examinations can lead to residency programs favoring students who have already posted a passing USMLE Step 1 score. In addition, programs may also prevent students from participating in visiting 4<sup>th</sup> year sub-internship rotations, further affecting a candidate's opportunity to match. Studies have shown that candidates in orthopaedic surgery match at locations of 4<sup>th</sup> year sub-internship rotations approximately 60 percent of the time.

While the USMLE Part 1 Exam is not solely used to differentiate candidates, it is an integral part of residency director evaluations for acceptance. Numerous studies have associated the success on USMLE Part 1 with later American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (ABOS) Part 1 passage. Creating a cohort of some medical students with posted scores and others without scores would produce an uneven playing field for the candidates.

Please consider the potential adverse consequences affecting applicants from medical schools requiring a later examination timeframe who apply for competitive residency positions without standardized USMLE Step 1 test scores. The absence of this key information used to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant may place him or her at a disadvantage during the selection process. We appreciate your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

The American Orthopaedic Association's  
Council of Orthopaedic Residency Directors