



# Preparing for the COMLEX-PE

Standard Setting and Remediation



# Connecting to NBOME

- Know the standards for the national exam
- Set institutional standards
  - At least as “high” or “higher” than those of the NBOME
  - Also keep in touch with the expectations of the NBME
  - Cover all areas covered nationally
  - Individualize your preparatory exam content with respect to the goals and objectives of your own institution



# What Comes First?

- Content or Standards?
  - Are the standards universal?
  - Do we have different standards for different content areas?
  - If so, why are they different?
  - How are they different?
  - Is it OK that they are different?



# Defining Content

What should students know at each level of their training?

- UNE preparation begins in Year 1
- Knowledge expectations are defined for each year
- Content areas include human systems, medical ethics, medical humanities, psychosocial wellness, health promotion & disease prevention, and OPP



# Defining Skills

What physical exam skills should students have at each level of training?

- Observation, Auscultation, Percussion, Palpation
- Proper Use of Instruments
- Parts of the Physical Exam
- Structural Exam



# Interpersonal & Communication Skills

## Interpersonal

- ❖ Introducing Self
- ❖ Appropriate Demeanor
- ❖ Explaining Exam
  - ❖ Preparing Patient
- ❖ Empathy

## Communication

- ❖ Effective Questioning
- ❖ Active Listening
- ❖ Appropriate Language
- ❖ Summarizing Information
- ❖ Asking for Questions
- ❖ Closure



# Other Skills

- ✓ Use of Standard Precautions
- ✓ Organization of the Interview
- ✓ Organization of the Physical Exam
- ✓ Logical Questions & Exam in light of Chief Complaint or Reason for Visit
- ✓ Using Information to Determine Next Steps
- ✓ Documentation



# Attitude & Behavior

- Has a Professional Image & Appearance
- Is Responsible, Reliable, Dependable
- Performs with Integrity & Honesty
- Is Self-Disciplined
- Shows Emotional Maturity
- Uses Sound Judgment
- Functions Adequately Under Pressure
- Knows Limits & Learns from Errors



# Professionalism

- Altruism
- Communication
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Excellence
- Honor
- Caring
- Compassion
- Leadership
- Accountability
- Scholarship
- Integrity



# Standards

- Vary by Year
- Different for Some Skills
  - Some Skills Harder to Master
  - Accept a Lower Level of Performance for Some
  - OK because of the Nature of the Skill
- Measure Competence



# Competence

- Minimal Acceptable Level of Performance
- Can be Difficult to Define
- Should be Discussed and Agreed to by Faculty
- Must be Clearly Defined for Measurement Purposes



# Questions for Setting Standards

1. When is a student's knowledge base insufficient?
2. What is the minimal amount of data a student must gather from the patient?
3. What physical exam techniques must they have mastered?
4. What minimum level of interpersonal and communication skills does the student need to have in order to progress to their next level of training?



# OMM Skills

- Is there a minimal level of OMM skill that a student should have before being allowed to touch a patient? How can that best be tested?
- What minimum level of OMM skill must a students have in order to proceed to their next level of training?



# Examples of Minimum Standards

- ▶ Effective questioning: Student used only 1 or 2 open-ended questions and did not elicit clarification in most instances
- ▶ Active listening: Student maintained moderate eye contact, interrupted only once or twice, used few leading questions, was reasonably attentive
- ▶ Appropriate language: Student seldom used medical jargon and was fairly easy to understand



# Measurement Issues

Best Method to Test Various Areas

Normalized or Criterion Based

Training for Accuracy and Consistency

Continuous Quality Control

Secondary Reviews

Peer Debriefing



# Identifying Problem Students

## ➤ Red Flags:

- Patient indication that they would not return to the student for future medical care
- Student is highly disorganized in gathering information
- Student does not know how to conduct parts of the physical exam
- Student cannot properly document a patient visit



# Fail or Remediate?

## Purpose –

- To teach students how to take and pass the COMLEX-PE.
- To determine student weaknesses and help students to overcome them.
- To weed out poor students and prevent them from entering the field unprepared (or at all).



# Remediation

- Determine areas of student weakness
- Individualize learning tasks
- Include several teaching modalities
  - Reading
  - Computerized tutorials
  - Faculty/student interactions
  - Practice with models or SPs
  - Students should document their remedial work



# Re-Test

- Done at UNE in the SP-based portion of their clinical education
- Use similar cases, but not the same cases the student has already been exposed to
- Do not repeat the entire test – focus on the areas that reflect the student’s weaknesses in order to judge improvement



# After Remediation

- Determine if student has improved enough to pass the exam and move forward in the program.
- If there is no improvement, or inadequate improvement, student should be reviewed by a faculty group to determine next steps – these might include more remediation, repeating courses, or counseling for students who may not be good candidates for continuing in Osteopathic Medicine.