Curricular Reform in a Time of Health Care Reform

James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., Elaine Soper, Ph.D. and Arnold Hassen, Ph.D.
West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, Lewisburg, WV

Introduction
New challenges have emerged for osteopathic medical education (OME) due to increasing focus on competency based education in a time of health care reform. While new curricular models and adult learning strategies are resulting in curricular change in OME, are the colleges of osteopathic medicine (COMs) doing enough to prepare future osteopathic physicians for the practice of medicine in the 21st century? This poster presents the challenges faced by OME to meet the expectations that students and physicians are being trained to meet the needs of delivering health care in a changing environment. To address these challenges requires an understanding of health care reform and osteopathic competency domains. This poster will discuss curricular models and instructional strategies in order to create a dynamic curriculum that can address the needs of osteopathic medical students. As an example, the conference theme “Building Healthy Behaviors: Medical Education for Prevention and Change” is a critical element of health care reform and a competency expected of osteopathic students and physicians. How is prevention and behavioral change being incorporated in the curricula of the COMs? It is the hope of the presenters that a dialogue can be established among the COMs to share ideas, strategies, and best practices so that our medical students can be prepared to address the health care needs of our nation. To this end a mechanism of continued dialogue using social media is offered as a part of this presentation.

OME Curricular Reform
Osteopathic curricular reform must occur in order to prepare future D.O.’s for practicing osteopathic medicine in a changing health care environment. Specific areas that need to be addressed to create change include:

- Prevention
- Behavioral Change
- Information Management
- Electronic Health Records
- Medical Economics
- Operations Management
- Population Health
- Interprofessional Teams
- Leadership

Osteopathic Medical Curricular Models: There are several curricular models that are currently being used by the COMs to educate osteopathic medical students. These include: traditional preclinical curricular models that are discipline-based and/or system-based and are followed by clinical rotations in the 3rd and 4th years; newer curricular models that use a patient presentation and/or application-based approach in the preclinical years followed by the traditional clinical clerkships; and hybrid models which are integrating basic science experiences throughout the medical curriculum currently. These curricular models incorporate diverse delivery strategies ranging from traditional lecture based teaching to increasing use of standardized patients, robotic simulation, and case-based approaches. While problem-based learning continues to be utilized at some COMs, the use of team-based learning and other application methodologies are being incorporated as alternatives. The challenge is determining what are the most effective curricular strategies for producing graduates who are prepared to practice osteopathic medicine in the 21st century?

Osteopathic Medical Competencies: The fundamental osteopathic medical competency domains provide a framework for addressing the training needs of our students in the current and future practice environment. The domains provide a comprehensive listing of what is needed to be a competent physician. Both ACOMC and NBOME have dedicated significant resources to the creation of documents that assist the COMs in addressing the competency needs of educating the modern day osteopathic medical student.

Fundamental Osteopathic Medical Competency Domains*
- Osteopathic Principles & Practice and Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment
- Osteopathic Patient Care
- Application of Knowledge for Osteopathic Medical Practice
- Practice-Based Learning and Improvement in Osteopathic Medicine
- Interprofessional and Communication Skills in the Practice of Osteopathic Medicine
- Professionalism in the Practice of Osteopathic Medicine
- Systems-Based Practice in Osteopathic Medicine

So templates exist, but there are several significant challenges including: determining the developmental sequence for each competency domain, developing effective learning experiences for all the competencies and evaluating all the elements of each competency domain. A competency-based curricular model that incorporates the changing environment of health care is the ideal solution, but this new curricular model remains to be defined and created.

What are other COMs doing in the area of curricular reform?

WV SOM reviewed the osteopathic curricula of all the COMs prior to developing its new preclinical curriculum. In addition, WV SOM extensively examined the curricula of ATSU-SOMA, OH-HCOM, UNTHSC/TCOM and University of Calgary SOM. We discovered that there is a lot of good work being done in the area of curricular reform, much of which does not find its way into peer reviewed publications. The goal of this presentation is to provide a rigorous dialogue about these challenges and to share curriculum development information across COMs. We encourage other COMS to share information about how they are addressing the challenges of preparing their students for health care reform. To that end we have set up a Facebook page with links to a threaded discussion group. A web site will include information on curricular reform, health care reform and osteopathic competency domains; others can post additional material so we encourage you to participate in the conversation about curricular reform at your COM!

Dialogue/Social Media platforms to discuss curricular reform: Please continue the dialogue by logging onto the Facebook page located at:
http://www.facebook.com/OMECurricularReform
also go to our web site for additional information on curricular reform:
http://www.wvsom.edu/Academics/curricular_reform

References
3. Ibid

Acknowledgments
The authors acknowledge the contribution by Perry Bryant, Executive Director of the West Virginians for Affordable Health Care who prepared and provided the booklet entitled “The Affordable Care Act and Its Impact on Future Doctors”. The authors also acknowledge the contribution of the WV SOM Department of Marketing and Communications are acknowledged for preparing the poster for display and creating the social media links, respectively.