Impact of the Single Accreditation System on GME Governance and the Physician Workforce

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In July of 2014, the AOA House of Delegates voted to support the single accreditation agreement that will make the AOA and AACOM member organizations of the ACGME and bring all GME accreditation under the authority of the ACGME. The transition to ACGME-accreditation will occur from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2020, with the AOA ceasing all accreditation efforts on June 30, 2020.

The single accreditation system could have significant impact on access to care. The conversion to ACGME will require resources (faculty, support staff, other financial) for many institutions. Will institutions shift resources to certain programs? What is the consequence of ACGME conversion on a minority profession that has its own approach to medicine and also compromises a disproportionately large piece of the primary care workforce, particularly those practicing in underserved areas?

In order to ensure continued access to quality care, the following steps are recommended as we enter the transition phase:

1. Resources must be directed toward completion of institutional sponsor and program applications for ACGME accreditation.
2. Candidates who understand and can explain the important contributions of osteopathic medicine and medical education should be nominated to the ACGME Review Committees.
3. The purpose and eligibility requirements of the examinations that lead to licensure and board certification must be reexamined so that a balance between ensuring public safety and maximizing access to physician care can be met.