Merging Allopathic and Osteopathic Graduate Medical Education: Is it Worth It?

David J. Park, DO, FAAFP, FACOFP
Health Policy Fellow 2013
Objectives

1. Understand the problematic issue that initiated the AOA-ACGME merger efforts
2. Review the stakeholders of the merger
3. Understand the projected outcomes of the merger
4. Explore unintended consequences of a merger
5. Recommendation
The Issue

• In 2011, the ACGME proposed two policy changes to their Common Program Requirements
  – Both changes would not recognize AOA residency training years for entry into ACGME programs

• Problems for the osteopathic profession
  – Mass migration of osteopathic medical students to allopathic programs
  – Not enough osteopathic GME slots to accommodate all osteopathic medical school graduates
## Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accredited Programs</th>
<th>Number of Residents</th>
<th>Number of First-Year Residency Slots in 2012</th>
<th>Number of medical school graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACGME</td>
<td>&gt; 9,000</td>
<td>116,000 (~ 9,000 DOs)</td>
<td>24,034 17,338 (US MD grads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA</td>
<td>&gt; 1,000</td>
<td>&gt; 7,000</td>
<td>2,589 4,773 (US DO grads)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NRMP Data 2013 (ACGME)

- 29,171  first year residency positions  filled
- 34,355  total applicants (3,000 more than in 2012)
- 17,487  US allopathic applicants (960 more than 2012)
- 2,677  US osteopathic applicants (317 more than 2012)
- 5,095  US citizen IMG’s (816 more than 2012)
- 7,568  non-U.S. IMG’s (740 more than 2012)
NMS Data 2013 (AOA)

- 2,836 first year positions available  (247 more than 2012)
  - 608 Tradition Rotating Internship positions   (22 more than 2012)
  - 2,228 Residency positions   (225 more than 2012)
- 1,833 first year positions filled  (113 more than 2012)
- 1,003 unfilled first year positions  (134 more than 2012)
  - 376 unfilled TRI positions   (25 more than 2012)
  - 627 unfilled Residency positions  (109 more than 2012)
Stakeholders

- American Osteopathic Association
- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
- American Hospital Association
- Residency Review Committee
- American Board of Medical Specialties
- Osteopathic specialty colleges
- Osteopathic specialty certification boards
- American Medical Student Association
- Student Osteopathic Medical Association
- Committee of Interns and Residents
- Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Projected Outcomes

1. Single, unified GME accreditation system
   – One accreditation process (one inspection)
2. Unrestricted GME access for DOs
3. Single match system
4. Unified voice in efforts to create more GME
5. Acknowledgement that osteopathic medical education is at par with allopathic
6. Potential cost savings and no delay of entry into the physician workforce
Unintended Consequences

1. Tremendous power to ACGME
2. Allopathic residents in OGME programs
3. Threat of closure of OGME programs
4. AOA and osteopathic specialty colleges could lose membership
5. Osteopathic specialty boards at risk
6. Osteopathic licensing boards may not be needed
7. Loss of osteopathic distinctiveness
Unanswered Questions

• Would MDs be allowed into OGME programs?
  – If so, how?

• Would all ACGME programs accept COMLEX?

• Would competency in OMM be a requirement for all programs?
  – Or would it be optional?

• Would osteopathic board certified PDs be eligible to be PDs for all ACGME residencies?
Analysis

• ACGME is *not* preventing new OMS graduates from entering their GME programs
• A singled, unified accreditation system is not required to have a single match system
• Long term risk of losing osteopathic distinctiveness and the profession's autonomy
• Too many unknown variables
Recommendation

- Patient outcomes – neutral
- Student outcomes – neutral
- Osteopathic specialty colleges and certification boards – negative
- ACGME standpoint – positive
- AOA/AACOM standpoint – risky

Risks outweigh benefits at this time
References

- National Resident Matching Program, Results and Data: 2012-13. National Resident Matching Program
- American Osteopathic Association website
- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine website
- American Association of Medical Colleges website