

ILLUMINATING THE MOMENTS THAT MATTER

As NBME strives to achieve optimal care for all, excellence in medical education is an imperative that touches every future patient. Our purpose is strengthening crucial moments of the medical education journey with tools and assessments that support learners and educators, helping ensure patient care is built on mastery. This edition of *NBME Impact: A Community Report* illuminates those moments that matter on the journey:

PAGE 1

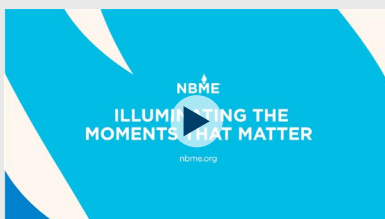
- ▶ **Strengthening the student journey** through new financial resources and improved assessment services.

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- ▶ **Advancing assessment with researcher and educator support**, including grants and the new Communication Learning Assessment.

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- ▶ **Spotlighting our people** who are dedicated to our mission and contributing in the ways that matter.



STRENGTHENING THE STUDENT JOURNEY

New Medical Student Organization Assistance Initiative Supports Vital Student Work

In August 2025, NBME launched a new Medical Student Organization Assistance initiative to support the vital work of students across the country. This pilot program provides **individual organizations with awards of up to \$7,500**, helping to empower student leaders with the resources they need. Learn more on [NBME's Contributions website page](#).



**AWARDS
OF UP TO
\$7,500**

New Interface for NBME® Self-Assessments Aligns with USMLE® Testing Experience

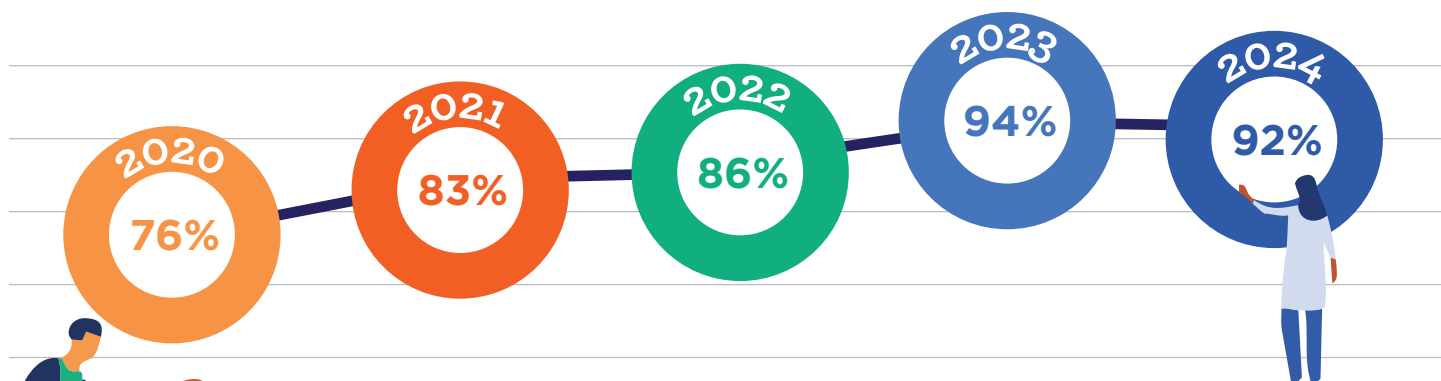
In September 2025, the interface for the NBME Self-Assessment [Clinical Science Mastery Series](#) was updated to **better align the look and feel of the testing experience** with the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®). This update involves the Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry and Surgery Self-Assessments. Some of the new interface features include:

- ▶ Improved navigation for viewing items and answer explanations, including searchable laboratory values, and highlighting.
- ▶ Implementation of a notes feature, image controls, dark theme and text resize (up to 200%).

Examinees can explore the change by viewing this [Sample Assessment](#), which includes a tutorial and 12 sample questions laid out in the new interface. An updated interface for the remaining Clinical Science Mastery Series and the Comprehensive Self-Assessments will be available in 2026.

STRENGTHENING THE STUDENT JOURNEY (continued)

Percentage of USMLE Accommodation Requests Approved Fully or Partially



Supporting Learners Through the USMLE Accommodations Process

Since 2021, examinee requests for accommodations on the USMLE have **increased by 116%, with 4,700 requests coming in 2024**. Expanded advocacy and educational efforts at institutions have been crucial in raising awareness of test accommodations, helping to empower individuals to seek the support they need. The Disability Services team is committed to supporting examinees on their medical education journey by providing a standardized review process which includes an individualized review of every accommodations request. In addition, the Disability Services team is committed to:

- ▶ Reviewing **all** accommodations requests within approximately **60 business days** to carefully consider all information provided by examinees.
- ▶ Providing an overview of the application process through a [new video on USMLE's website](#).
- ▶ Offering access to a fair and valid examination to all examinees.



4,700
ACCOMMODATIONS
REQUESTS IN 2024

ADVANCING ASSESSMENT WITH RESEARCH AND EDUCATOR SUPPORT

Celebrating 30 Years of Stemmler Grants

For 30 years, the [Edward J. Stemmler MD Medical Education Research Grants](#) have supported groundbreaking work in medical education assessment. The program has awarded **105 grants** totaling **\$10.7 million** to projects that have helped advance how we evaluate and educate physicians. To date, nearly **75 institutions** have received support through this initiative, with more than **110 researchers** having taken part in Stemmler grant projects.

In 2025, the Stemmler Grants Program supported two researchers with projects that have the potential to advance medical education assessment practices:

Brenessa Lindeman, MD, MEHP, an associate professor from the University of Alabama at Birmingham; **Cristina M. Gonzalez, MD, MEd**, a professor of Medicine and Population Health from New York University Grossman School of Medicine. [Learn more on NBME's website](#).



Brenessa Lindeman, MD, MEHP

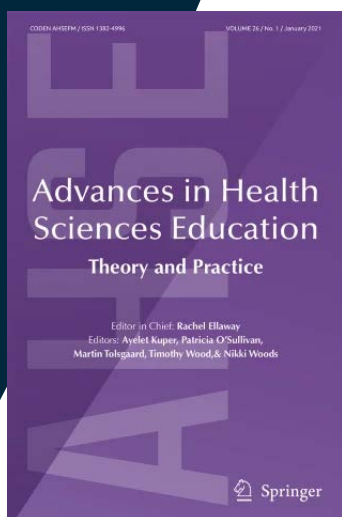


Cristina M. Gonzalez, MD, MEd

Creating New Learning Opportunities Through Research and Innovations

NBME's research experts are exploring and applying innovative solutions to develop assessments that measure the knowledge and skills medical learners need to provide optimal, effective care to all. Two areas of our research focus include:

- ▶ **Communication Learning Assessment (CLA):** NBME recently conducted an efficacy study that explored how CLA impacted pre-clerkship students' ability to communicate effectively and confidently with patients. Our assessment tool provides students opportunities to practice this skill using exemplar-based feedback and guided self-reflection. **Nine out of 10 students** felt more confident in communicating with patients after completing the CLA, and results indicated students who were assigned the full CLA feedback condition showed **significantly higher odds (43%) of demonstrating patient-centered communication behaviors**.
- ▶ **Clinical Reasoning:** NBME researchers recently published **two studies to advance assessment of this critical competency**. The [first explores the clinical reasoning skills](#) of fourth-year medical students through think-aloud interviews. The study's findings present an initial framework that can help **shape how best to structure clinical reasoning instruction** in medical education across the novice-to-expert continuum. The [second study provides validity evidence for a new clinical reasoning item format](#) developed by NBME called SHARP (Short Answer, Rationale Provision). The format presents a patient chart to students and asks them to justify their clinical interpretations and decisions. NBME is currently exploring options for including these types of items in existing exams to provide greater value to medical schools and students.



With its newly created Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI) unit, NBME continues to grow its AI and natural language processing capabilities to support these innovations. Evaluating complex constructs such as communication and clinical reasoning requires the ability to efficiently score a vast number of free-text responses or deliver personalized feedback to larger learner groups within tight timelines. Learn more about this team's work on our [Innovations in Assessments web page](#).

SPOTLIGHTING OUR PEOPLE

NBME Leaders Recognized for Their Contributions

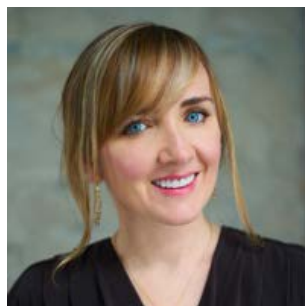
NBME leaders are dedicated to making significant contributions and impactful advancements that move medical education and assessment forward.

- ▶ In October 2025, **Linda Gadsby, Esq.**, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer was honored with **National Medical Fellowships' (NMF) Corporate Ally in Medical Education Award**. Dedicated to broadening the pathways to medical education, NMF supports students pursuing medical and health careers with scholarships and resources to foster their success. In her role overseeing NBME's Community Collaborations and Contributions unit, Gadsby has partnered with NMF to increase opportunities for medical students by providing scholarships and USMLE fee assistance as they pursue their dreams of becoming doctors. Learn more about her recognition on [NMF's website](#).



Linda Gadsby, Esq.

SPOTLIGHTING OUR PEOPLE (continued)



Anastasiya Lipnevich, PhD



Kimberly Swygert, PhD

- ▶ **Anastasiya Lipnevich, PhD**, Principal Measurement Scientist, has completed her 2024-2025 **Fellowship for the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS)** with the University of Surrey in the UK. This prestigious Fellowship recognizes scholars whose work pushes the boundaries of their disciplines. Professor Lipnevich's research focuses on how feedback in an educational setting affects learning and development, and her Fellowship aimed to develop a strategy for translating that research into educational practice. In her role at NBME, Lipnevich brings her expertise to help us expand our capabilities in formative assessment and feedback, or assessment for learning. Learn more about her Fellowship and research on the [IAS website](#).
- ▶ **Kimberly Swygert, PhD**, Director, Test Development Innovations, received the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy's (FSBPT) 2025 President Award. As a long-time member of FSBPT's Technical Advisory Panel, Dr. Swygert has made invaluable contributions from technical, test development and innovations perspectives to help maintain the highest standards of psychometric integrity and public protection for the licensure exams for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants in the U.S.

Welcoming New Faces

Fresh perspectives can help drive creative approaches and new opportunities to better meet the needs of the medical education community.

- ▶ **Stephanie E Mann, MD**, joined NBME as the Director, Curricular Affairs in March 2025. Mann is a practicing OB/GYN physician and brings over 30 years of experience in leading, designing and delivering curricula and assessments across the medical education continuum. In this role, Mann is focused on the development and implementation of formative assessment approaches of skills and behaviors in health professions education.
- ▶ **Jim Moran** joined the organization as the Assistant Vice President, IT Security, Disaster Recovery and Compliance in May 2025. He oversees the strategy and execution of security systems that protect critical data and systems.
- ▶ **Sarah Reese** joined NBME in May 2025 as the Director, Communications, driving strategic and measurable communications to unify the work of NBME employees across the organization.
- ▶ **Amy Smith** joined the organization in March 2025 as the Director, Exam Integrity, playing a pivotal role in ensuring the integrity and validity of our exam programs.

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🔍 **Access** [previous editions](#) of *NBME Impact*.

