

REIMAGINING ASSESSMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

In this edition of *NBME Impact: A Quarterly Report*, you will learn how NBME collaborated with you and recalibrated to deliver high-quality assessments during 2020. What emerged were creative solutions and new approaches that would have been impossible to accomplish without the **528** dedicated educators, health care leaders and other professionals, who represent **179** organizations and institutions. Read more about these talented individuals in the 2020 Committee & Task Force Directories for [NBME](#) and the [United States Medical Licensing Examination® \(USMLE®\)](#). We hope you enjoy reading this edition of *NBME Impact: A Quarterly Report* and learn how working together—and with more of your feedback—has enabled NBME to contend with COVID-19's impact on assessment and beyond.

REFLECTIONS FROM NBME LEADERSHIP: VIDEO ADDRESSES

In the videos below, NBME President and CEO **Peter J. Katsufraakis, MD, MBA**, and Chair of NBME's Executive Board **Alfred F. Tallia, MD, MPH**, each provide insight gained from the past year, which will help NBME move forward into a new era of medical education. *To access the videos, click on the graphics below.*



NBME's COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)

NBME is firmly committed to demonstrating DEI values and practices in our staff composition and work culture; products and services; and engagement with the Philadelphia, medical education and assessment communities. Because education is fundamental to NBME, with the help of expert DEI consultants, NBME staff and leadership have been immersed in foundational learning to incorporate DEI into everything we do. Over the past nine months, our progress has included but has not been limited to cultural competence training for NBME leaders; the creation of a DEI Advisory Council; the implementation of a DEI-focused Reading Club; and the curation and completion of a 21-day DEI Educational Challenge. We have also continued our work in initiatives already underway, such as NBME's **13-year** participation as a Power Partner in [Philadelphia's Achieve Now program](#). We will continue to keep you apprised of our progress in DEI.

Ongoing DEI Efforts in Assessment Creation & Fair Scoring Practices

- ▶ A DEI approach to assessment is supported by the Test Development committees that rely on diversity of voice, experience and background to reflect the patient populations our examinees serve. Diverse representation—in geography, institution type, subspecialty, role, gender, race/ethnicity—of Test Development committee members has steadily increased over time. For example, in 2011, **38%** of USMLE committee members were women, and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups made up **15%** of members. In 2020, **49%** of USMLE committee members were women, and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups comprised nearly **24%** of membership.
- ▶ For several years, NBME's Test Development staff, Research and Measurement staff and committee members have incorporated DEI principles into their [assessment creation and review processes](#). As an example, the Joining Forces Veteran Affairs project addressed implicit bias in item creation by asking writers to develop additional USMLE military questions unrelated to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) because this diagnosis was overrepresented in exam items involving military patients. As of January 2021, the entire USMLE exam pool of content has been reviewed to identify and eliminate stereotyping and bias. This attention to looking at our work through a DEI lens is also supported through Item Writing Workshops as well as with the newly revised [NBME® Item Writing Guide](#) which provides guidance on including patient characteristics in exam content.
- ▶ NBME's Psychometrics and Data Analysis unit implements a variety of methods to ensure fairness. This occurs through measurement practices that illustrate equitable treatment and access; reflect the same construct for all examinees; produce scores that have the same meaning for all examinees; and do not advantage or disadvantage individuals because of characteristics irrelevant to the construct being measured. In upcoming editions of this report, you will learn more about NBME's ongoing DEI research efforts.

RECOGNIZING NEEDS & FINDING SOLUTIONS

NBME is proud to offer a variety of assessments and educational services, including Academic & Professional Programs and [USMLE](#), which is co-owned by NBME and the Federation of State Medical Boards. To enhance these programs, we collaborate with you directly. In 2020, more than **800** medical educators attended NBME's Town Hall and webinars, and our customers responded to nearly **20** surveys to help us better understand their assessment needs. Learn more about these programs from the perspectives of NBME talent who confronted challenges in 2020 with innovative solutions.

Academic & Professional Programs

The biggest challenge of 2020 was supporting schools suddenly shifting from in-person to remote delivery of education. To enable the continuity of schools' assessment plans, we needed to shift our delivery model to remote as well. The most valuable direction was from our customers—leaders of assessment at schools—who guided our transition to remote delivery of Subject Examinations and Customized Assessment Services.

- ▶ More than **30** countries use NBME® Assessment Programs which include Subject Examinations, Customized Assessment Services, IFOM® and NBME® Self-Assessments.
- ▶ Since offering Web-Conferencing with Remote Proctoring in 2020, more than **70%** of Subject Examinations and Customized Assessment Services were delivered using this option.



GREG BAKER, PSYD
Director, Technical Product Management



RENEE GAGLIARDI
Director, Product Management



AMY GILTHORPE
Manager, Outreach

Outreach

In 2020 we had to quickly determine new ways to connect with all of our stakeholders. By staff working together, we were able to create virtual engagement opportunities such as town halls, forums, podcasts, webinars, as well as attending conferences remotely. In this way, NBME has actually been able to engage with more customers and stakeholders than we could have possibly imagined.

USMLE

In 2020 we had to conceptualize and implement new exam delivery platforms for USMLE in response to the disruption in testing due to COVID-19, all the while keeping our stakeholders up to date on our progress through multiple communication channels. Many people across NBME and our external partners, in a relatively short period of time, helped deliver two solutions: regional testing and event testing. Testing went smoothly, and our examinees and stakeholders were very pleased with our responsiveness. We are incredibly grateful to the medical education community for their partnership to create more testing opportunities for examinees.

- ▶ In 2020, **54** schools participated in at least one of the four USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 Clinical Knowledge testing events, and **six** schools hosted students within their regions for a total of **1,376** exam days.



SUZANNE MCELLHENNEY
Director, Program Management



AMY BUONO
Director, Program Management

REDESIGNING & REFOCUSING

Learn about NBME's progress towards creating assessment offerings that meet your needs and respond to the dynamism of medical education.

Assessment Research & Innovation

Part of how NBME reimagines assessment is through the research of new exam modalities. NBME's work on a short-answer question (SAQ) project has involved exploring open-text items designed to solicit examinee-generated answers to exam questions. This exam modality mirrors a physician's thought process, which often requires the development of multiple hypotheses (including differential diagnoses) to determine how best to treat patients. In the next edition of this report, we will share more about this work as well as NBME's progress on automated item generation.

New Competency-Based Assessment Unit Created

As medicine evolves, so does the expected range of competencies essential for patient care. Led by **Michael Barone, MD, MPH**, NBME's new Competency-Based Assessment unit will develop and deliver a range of assessments that support the comprehensive development of all the important competencies for health care professionals. To achieve this, the unit will build collaborative relationships with the global medical education community and develop partnerships with assessment and technology innovators. The new unit reflects the steps NBME has taken to continue to engage medical educators and others on the front lines of curricula and health care delivery.

NBME.org: A New Look & Interface for Better Connection with You

So that we can better connect with examinees, medical educators and other community members, a redesigned [NBME.org](https://www.nbme.org) launched in early 2020. You can now engage with us in more meaningful ways as you learn, educate and advance the science of assessment. This redesign, which clarifies what we do and how we do it, was timely and necessary, as NBME.org has communicated critical assessment changes resulting from COVID-19.

WELCOMING NEW TALENT

In 2020, four strategic leaders joined NBME to complement the existing leadership team and help actualize NBME's vision and goals.



LINDA M. GADSBY, ESQ.
Vice President and
General Counsel



ANTOINETTE CROCKRELL, MBA
Vice President,
Business Development



ALEX J. MECHABER, MD
Associate Vice President,
Physician Licensure
Programs



CHRISTOPHER FEDDOCK, MD, MS
Executive Director,
Clinical Skills Evaluation
Collaboration

NEWS FOR YOU

Below you will find resources and stories about ongoing initiatives like [NBME Contributions](#), including the [Stemmler Fund](#) and [Assessment Science and Psychometrics Internship](#); the latter has mentored more than **20** researchers since 2016, and was executed virtually for the first time in 2020. These programs shape the NBME® assessments you engage with every day.

- ▶ [Stemmler Fund 25th Anniversary Interview Series](#)
- ▶ [‘It truly felt like a collaboration’ – Former NBME Intern Zarah Chaudhary Shares Her Experience](#)
- ▶ [Latin America Grants Program Advances Assessment with Partner Institutions](#)
- ▶ [Cohort Selected for New NBME Medical Education Research Fellowship](#)
- ▶ [New Versions of NBME® Self-Assessments and Webinar Recording Now Available](#)
- ▶ [Unlocking Assessment Video Series](#)
- ▶ [Comprehensive Basic Science Subject Examination Content Changes, Effective Feb. 3, 2021](#)

STAYING CONNECTED WITH US DURING COVID-19 & BEYOND

You can relay your needs while staying updated on NBME's latest innovative solutions. Start with these next steps:

- ▶ **Take our survey:** Your feedback is invaluable, and it directly informs us of your needs and preferences. Complete [this brief, anonymous survey](#) to let us know your thoughts about the content within this edition of *NBME Impact: A Quarterly Report*.
- ▶ **Connect with us on NBME social media channels.** You can connect with us on LinkedIn [@NBME.org](#), follow us on Twitter [@NBMENow](#) and like us on Facebook [@NBME.org](#).
- ▶ **Access [the winter edition](#)** of this report to learn about NBME's efforts in other areas.

We hope this edition of *NBME Impact: A Quarterly Report* finds you well.

Thank you for your continued engagement and support, especially in light of the additional demands asked of your professional skill sets and energies during this time.

This newly created publication is intended to help you comprehensively learn about NBME's responses to the needs of the medical education community, ongoing activities and new initiatives. We encourage you to share this report to keep those within your professional and educational circles informed and engaged as well. If you have any questions about content, please email Communications@nbme.org.

