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NYMC Synapse September 2019 Issue

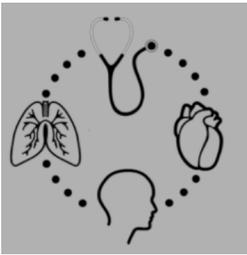
School of Medicine Student Senate, New York Medical College

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Recommended Citation

School of Medicine Student Senate, New York Medical College. (2019). NYMC Synapse September 2019 Issue. Retrieved from https://touro scholar.touro.edu/nymc_synapse/7

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NYMC Synapse

Transmitting news to the students of New York Medical College

September 2019 Issue

Welcome Back!

By Scarlett Tohme

It's a brand new academic year here at NYMC and everyone is excited to experience the new year, whether you're just starting out as an M1 or completing Sub-I's and filling out ERAS as an M4. Welcome to a new year of amazing learning experiences and so many opportunities to create new memories that will last a lifetime. To the Class of 2023, welcome to the NYMC family! Take advantage of every moment that you're here, it's truly a once in a lifetime experience. And to my returning upperclassmen, continue to rock it and enjoy what the year will bring!

As elected members of the NYMC Student Senate, we believe in our role of bringing people together whether it within your class, among student organizations, alumni events, or connecting you with our great administration. Our goal is to keep you well-informed and well-connected so that we can all continue to nourish the great community we have at NYMC.

What is Synapse?

The *NYMC Synapse* is a newsletter published by the NYMC Student Senate for our classmates, faculty, administration and other students at NYMC. We highlight news from student senate, medical education, student affairs, and financial planning, give important updates for each class and highlight big events, outstanding students, and extraordinary professors.

Keep an eye out for these newsletters about once a month and don't miss out on the amazing things that are happening at NYMC!

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Message from our Student Senate President

By Jen Lindelof

My name is Jen Lindelof and it is my honor to serve as your Student Senate President this year. It is truly a pleasure to be a part of a community where students really care for each other and strive to build positive relationships that support both academic and personal growth. We have all chosen the difficult path of becoming a physician, but the hard work, compassion and empathy displayed by NYMC students is inspiring.

Over the past three years I have seen Student Senate work tirelessly to improve the experience of being an NYMC student. From sponsoring events like Wellness Week and NYMed Talks, to coordinating institutional changes with the administration, Senate has strived to accurately represent the student perspective. We enthusiastically embrace the challenge of a new year and have an

unbelievable cast of characters in place to address the task. Please be nice to your class senators, they are working really hard on your behalf!

Whether you are taking your first classes at NYMC or putting the finishing touches on your application for residency, please take advantage of Student Senate. We are here to support all of you and help make our time at NYMC the best it can be. I challenge you to advocate for yourself, for your classmates, and for positive change. So, whether it is an idea for how to improve student wellness, a change you'd like to see made to the curriculum, or even something as simple as more ping pong balls for the student lounge, let us know!

Seriously, reach out, my inbox is always open
SSenate_President@nymc.edu.

Letter to the M1s

By Jood Ani

Hello M1s,

Although you may have already heard this over and over again, congrats on not only being a part of the NYMC family, but also finishing your first exam of medical school. I remember my first couple weeks of medical school being daunting but at the same time exciting. You are geared up and ready to go, while at the same time, you may be thinking about the future of your first year and of your medical school career. Despite what you may have heard through the grape vine, first year is an adjustment and a challenge but it's nowhere near impossible.

My advice for academics is to be adaptable. These classes are new in terms of material and speed, and they may go into more depth than what you are previously used to. That being said, it's okay if you find that your old study methods are not working. Find what works best for you. Although it's easier said than done, try not to compare yourself to your classmates. Just because something works for one class, that doesn't mean that it will work for all of your classes through first year or the rest of medical school. THAT'S OKAY. There's always a trial and error period with every class and every year.

Imposter syndrome. We've all heard of it. We may have had it at some point. You may have never had it—if that's the case, you're lucky. I know I've experienced it, particularly at the beginning of my first year. It can eat at you and make you doubt yourself. But here's the thing... YOU'RE HERE. You wouldn't have made it here if you didn't deserve it. There's such a tremendous amount of work and determination required to get to this point of your academic career, so don't let doubt fill your mind. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Of course, I could write more advice about the academic side of medical school, but I won't because I saved the most important piece of advice for the end. I urge you tremendously, no matter how your classes are going, to take care of yourself. Take stock weekly, biweekly, and monthly to see how you are feeling emotionally, mentally, and physically. Your wellbeing should be your top priority. Do what makes you happy, take breaks from studying, reach out to friends when you are feeling off. 5% of a better quality of life is worth 5 questions on an exam. We are pass/fail after all. Obviously, you should take care of your studies, so you don't have additional stress over your head. But don't burn yourself out. Don't set unrealistic academic goals for your day; you'll just end up feeling bad that you didn't complete your list of tasks. Reach out for help if you ever need it—academically, and especially non-academically. Set yourself up for success in and out of the classroom. I'm sure this all feels like a broken record player at this point, but I cannot stress this point enough. As someone who started off so strong the beginning of first year and then fell into a deep hole of depression later, I wouldn't be here today if I didn't reach out to someone. So, for yourself, reach out when you feel off, be preventative, and do things outside of your studies that make you happy. Schedule in those study breaks so you can take a breath outside of your favorite study spot.

On that note, give yourself a round of applause; you should be so proud to have achieved so much at this point. I wish you the best for not only the rest of your first year, but also your careers. I hope you use my advice. It's the advice I wish I'd received at the beginning of my first year. You're amazing, each and every one of you.

Best Regards,
Jood Ani

M2s, You're Now the Big Dogs on Campus!

By Mark Brombacher

Class of 2022, welcome to the beast that is Second Year! You're already plenty deep into what I can promise will be one of the most challenging things you've ever done, but I know you're all up to the challenge. As a class, we wanted to send down just a few nuggets of "sage advice" that we received from the class above us or realized on our own during our time as M2 zombies...

Second year can be SO ISOLATING...it'll crush you if you allow it, but it doesn't have to! Please find time to spend together, and with people outside of school, even if that means going to study at Starbucks so you're not technically "alone", your mental health will thank you for it!

- This is when people will really start to differ in what resources they use to prepare, don't be afraid to experiment with one method for one exam and then try another for the next one. It's better to find your core resources early before you have to throw extra studying on top of that!

- You'll hear a ton of your classmates, especially in the second half of the year, "give up" on in-house exams in order to study for STEP...just understand that the best indicator of your eventual STEP performance is how well you do in Path/Pharm/Micro...this is definitely a personal preference thing, but just keep that in mind

- If you overhear M1's talking about an obscure part of Biochemistry or Physiology that you can NEVER

REMEMBER, don't be too proud to ask them to actually take a minute to refresh you on it!

- Enjoy your last year of having all the holidays off...this may seem insignificant, but the long-weekends give you something to look forward to as an M2 that you don't have as an M3/M4

- People not in medical school are NOT going to understand what it means to study for STEP 1. No matter how much you're dying inside, to them it's going to sound like just another big exam, you'll all need to support each other a lot during that time!!

You're now the big dogs on campus, set a good example for the new M1's like we hopefully did for you. It may seem like our class is never around anymore, but we're always here to support you and guide you through this journey we all have the privilege to endure. Best of luck, I know you're going to love finally learning some real medicine this year, it all gets so much more interesting from here!

- Mark Brombacher (Class of 2021, Senate)

Test Anxiety: Controversy Surrounding Internal Medicine Board Certification

By Reid Goodman

After a year on the medical floors I've been newly introduced to many long-running medical debates. For example, who is really supposed to be discharged from the hospital on aspirin? (Seriously, please let me know). There is one controversy with recent developments hovering just off-radar for us medical students: physician board certifications. On December 6th, 2018, four physicians filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of 100,000 internal medicine physicians against the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) alleging the decennial exams have become a burdensome misuse of time and money. Let me get you up to speed on the history and controversy surrounding the Maintenance of Certification process.

What are "The Boards" and where did they come from?

Specialty boards were established in the 1920s and 1930s as regulated measure of a doctor's competency in a given field. Today, there are 24 physician-led nonprofit specialty boards which adhere to general standards set by the umbrella organization: American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Prior to 1994, doctors took a certification exam once which granted them medical privileges for their entire career.

In 1994, the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), the largest specialty physician group, introduced the Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program, requiring a 10-year recertification exam plus other learning requirements. Physicians certified before 1994 still maintain their lifetime certification. Today, ABMS sets general guidelines and standards for MOC activities for each of the 24-member specialty boards, but each specialty has their own specific MOC process. Most boards require a recertification exam every 10 years. Since the MOC's induction, the ABIM and other member specialties have added requirements to the such as online practice modules and competency review projects by patients, each with their own cost.

Can I get quick pros and cons for the MOC?

Advocates for the MOC make some convincing arguments. The recurring boards have been shown to have a positive relationship to patient outcomes, number of patients seen, and other measures of physician competence. Likewise, it proves a

commitment to lifelong learning and is reassuring for patients that their doctors are well-versed in current medical knowledge. Many hospital systems require board certification to receive privileges to practice, and insurers often factor in board certification status when determining reimbursement.

Detractors say the content is not applicable to real-world practice, costs unreasonable amounts of time and money, and does not provide helpful feedback. Allegations of financial mismanagement of the non-profit boards have also swirled for years. MOC detractors do not criticize the need for continual education but argue the MOC in its current iteration is burdensome and unhelpful.

In 2015, one doctor created a petition acquiring over 20,000 signatures requesting the ABIM remove MOC online modules. Although the ABIM did not capitulate to the petition, it did take note of general physician unrest. In spring of 2017 the ABIM introduced a new MOC system allowing physicians to take a 3 hour test every 2 years instead of a 10 hour test every 10 years. The system was piloted for Internal Medicine and Nephrology in 2018, and is being extended to 16 more specialties by 2020. In response, the ABIM has been criticized for replacing one huge 'waste of time' every 10 years with five smaller 'wastes of time' every 2 years.

So, this lawsuit?

The lawsuit alleges that the ABIM charges inflated monopoly prices for maintaining certification and that ABIM has induced organizations (aka lobbied hospitals and insurance companies) to require their certification. The suit is seeking to find ABIM in violation of federal antitrust law and to bar the board from continuing its MOC process. By their estimation, the plaintiffs argue that internists spend on average \$23,607 in personal time and money lost over 10 years, and up to \$40,495 for some specialists. It is worth noting that each of the 4 plaintiffs (the physicians filing the suit) have had their specialty certification lapse at some point in their careers by either failing the exam or declining to renew.

Why does this matter us?

It doesn't, yet. The boards can comfortably stay off-radar for a few more years. However, now that we're past the our preclinical years we've begun to think about our futures' in a way that feels less distant and more real. With residency around the corner we are challenged to define our work and life goals with more clarity than ever before. This year we will continue to explore the hospital together as we turn the page into the next chapter of our careers. It makes me feel nervous and excited.

I wish you all the best for the coming weeks!

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