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Pennsylvania Waives Certain Requirements for Graduate Medical Trainees During COVID-19 Emergency

Due to the closure of testing centers during the COVID-19 disaster declaration, Graduate Medical Trainees (GMT) may not be able to take the standardized United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE). This exam – in conjunction with the determination of their residency program director – decides whether a medical resident should advance into their next year of training.

The Department of State and State Board of Medicine have requested, and the Governor has granted, a temporary waiver allowing a facility's resident program director to determine which GMTs have gained the skills and fulfilled the requirements necessary to advance in their postgraduate year (PGY) training in the absence of the USMLE.

The following requirements are temporarily waived:

- A GMT must pass Step 2 of the USMLE before entry into PGY2
- A GMT must pass Step 2 plus Step 3 of the USMLE before entry into PGY3

The resident program director has authority over and accountability for the operation of the residency program. The program director ensures that the residents achieve the learning objectives of the program through supervised patient care and clinical teaching. Therefore, it falls on the program director to determine whether a resident has fulfilled the requirements of their PGY year.

These waivers will allow the GMT to advance in their training, as their skills allow, and take the USMLE when the exam is available. Submission of exam results will be required if a licensee later renews at a higher level and upon application for an unrestricted license.

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