

**LEHIGH VALLEY HEALTH NETWORK**  
**Graduate Medical Education**

**GME Policy - USMLE Step III**

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**I. SCOPE:**

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) adopts this policy for the following selected licensed entities:

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|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Hospital   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocono VNA / Hospice                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Hospital – Hazleton   | <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Home Care – Schuylkill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Hospital – Pocono     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Home Care – Hazleton   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Hospital – Schuylkill | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairgrounds Surgical Center          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transitional Skilled Unit           | <input type="checkbox"/> LVHN Children’s Surgery Center       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Home Care             | <input type="checkbox"/> LVHN Surgery Center – Tilghman       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lehigh Valley Hospice               |   |

**II. POLICY:**

The Pennsylvania State Board of Medicine licensing regulations require all resident physicians participating in an ACGME accredited training program to pass the USMLE Step III exam prior to beginning the Post Graduate Year (PGY) three (3) level of training.

It is the institutional policy of Lehigh Valley Health Network that all allopathic resident physicians must take the USMLE Step III exam during their PGY-1 year of training prior to being offered a PGY-2 position.

Resident physicians who have not successfully passed the USMLE Step III exam by February 28 of their PGY-2 year of training will not be offered a PGY-3 position in a training program at Lehigh Valley Health Network.

Individual residency programs may have specific requirements for USMLE Step III which must be adhered to in addition to the institutional requirement.

Exceptions to this policy can be made by the DIO for extraordinary circumstances and every effort to take USMLE Step III at the earliest possible time must be made\*.

**\*COVID-19 PANDEMIC EXCEPTION:**

**This GME policy will be temporarily waived in accordance with the following statement issued by the PA Department of State on April 7, 2020:**

“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.”

**III. DEFINITIONS:**

**IV. PROCEDURE: N/A**

**V. REFERENCES: N/A**

**VI. ATTACHMENTS / FORMS: N/A**

**VII. DISCLAIMER:**

This policy and the implementing procedures are intended to provide a description of recommended courses of action to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and/or operational standards. It is recognized that there may be specific circumstances, not contemplated by laws or regulatory requirements that make compliance inappropriate. For advice in these circumstances, consult with the Departments of Risk Management and/or Legal Services and the Ethics Committee, as appropriate.

**VIII. REVIEW:**

Origination: mm / yyyy  
 Review / Revision: mm / yyyy, mm / yyyy

**Approved by the Graduate Medical Education Committee**

<b>Approved by:</b> Margaret Hadinger (Dir Grad Med Educ / Dio)	<b>Approval Date:</b> 09/03/2020
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