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Some Reassurance about ACGME Surveys in the setting of a Pandemic

1. Some Reassurance about ACGME Surveys in the setting of a Pandemic

0 Recommend



David A. Winger, MD, FACP

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APDIM members in both community and university forums were clear that there are concerns about how our ACGME survey results will look, and how they will be interpreted and acted upon by the ACGME, during these trying times that are highly variable for programs across the country. APDIM Councilor Margaret Lo, President-Elect Susan Lane and others on APDIM Council had drafted a note of concern, and prior to sending I reached out to IM RRC leader Jerry Vasilius to inquire to whom at the ACGME it should be addressed. What follows is his response:

From: Jerry Vasiliadis

Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 11:50 AM

Good to hear from you.

Thank you for doing what you can to help quell program directors' anxieties and concerns. Know that Sima and I are willing to do whatever we can to reassure folks as well. We do not want them to worry about the resident and faculty surveys, particularly this year of all years!

As you know, the surveys are part of the annual review of programs. The surveys used for the 2021 reviews are from the spring of 2020. This is worth noting because last year, due to the pandemic, participation in the surveys was optional, not required. Because of this, close to 40% of internal medicine did not "complete" the resident survey. ACGME considers a program as having "completed" the survey if at least 70% of the active residents provided responses. If this minimum threshold is not met, the program is not provided any summary of results. This is significant because it highlights the following point: for this year's review cycle, the resident survey could not be used in any accreditation capacity for approximately 40% of internal medicine programs.

I also need to highlight that for those programs that completed the survey (that is, met the 70% completion rate), the RC is reviewing their survey results *within the context of the pandemic*. The RC acknowledges that the surveys were deployed and being completed under very unusual circumstances, and is reviewing the results through that lens. It is also reviewing the COVID-19 questions and the additional information program directors provided in the "major changes" section in ADS for further context. Below are two slides from the deck Sima and I are going to give at the ACGME's Annual Education and at the upcoming APDIM meeting summarizing and highlighting these points.

NAS + Surveys + Pandemic

Concerns with using the 2020 surveys...

- Surveys deployed during start of pandemic.
- 3 window, last window was open for 3 months instead of 1.
- Completing surveys was **optional**, not required.

Resident Survey:

- **63%** of residency programs achieved 70% completion, even with extended window.
- If 70% completion not achieved, survey results are not shared.
- **At its September 2020 meeting, the RC decided that if the program achieved 70% completion on the RS and was flagged as an “outlier,” it would use the results *judiciously* in making accreditation decisions.**



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NAS + Surveys + Pandemic: Accreditation within context

If a program achieved 70% completion, summary reports are available...

- Surveys will be used within the context of the pandemic and within context of other information...
 - Responses to COVID-19 questions in ADS asking about the extent of disruptions to education
 - Additional information provided in “major changes and other updates” in ADS:

*Provide a brief update explaining any major changes to the program since the last academic year, including changes in leadership **and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your program.***

If a program did not achieve 70% completion, summary reports not available...

- Surveys will not be used to make accreditation actions.



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Lastly, as has been the case in the past, I can reassure you that the vast majority of internal medicine programs will **not** receive any citations or AFIs based on the resident survey. I can say this with confidence and certainty. Now that the January meeting is over, in the upcoming weeks, most internal medicine

residency and subspecialty program directors will receive a letter confirming substantial compliance with minimum requirements and no citations or AFIs. Those letters are being generated now. It will take some time to reach all program directors since 2,000+ letters need to be generated.

I understand that these are extremely challenging and stressful times. The RC-IM does too. It understands the context because the members themselves are program directors and faculty members experiencing the same challenges, disruptions, and uncertainty.

If you think this message would help the program directors, please share it with them.

Thank you again for reaching out.

Jerry

Jerry Vasilias, PhD | Executive Director
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Forwarded to you by David Winger. AAIM staff will be sharing a formal memo with this information given concerns not all members participate in the APDIM Discussion Forum.



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