COPE News: COPE to survey medical school faculty

The COPE website will host a brief online survey of medical school faculty members’ needs and experiences in teaching addiction-related topics. Developed with the help of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), the survey is designed to help COPE and other organizations and agencies better target their resources to meet the needs of medical school faculty and others who teach physicians-in-training.

The survey asks for faculty members’ input regarding the challenges involved in teaching about the prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment of tobacco use, unhealthy alcohol and drug use (including prescription drug abuse), and related medical and psychiatric conditions. It also asks respondents to report their resource needs and to identify resources they currently use that may be helpful to others who teach.

COPE Executive Committee members J. Harry Isaacson, M.D., and Stephen A. Wyatt, D.O., describe the survey as “an initial step in what we hope will become an ongoing dialogue with and among faculty at allopathic and osteopathic medical schools across the country.” Every participant will receive a report of the aggregated survey responses.

The survey will be posted on the COPE website in December 2012; its availability will be announced in emails to deans and faculty and in Addiction Education News.

Advocacy

AAMC Warns Against Cuts in Federal Research Support

In a recent statement on its website, the Association of American Medical Colleges warns of a nearly 10% cut to the research budget of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), scheduled to take effect in January 2013. AAMC points out that, as the largest federal funding agency for medical research, the NIH invested more than $30 billion in such research in fiscal year 2012. It added that more than half of these funds went to medical schools and teaching hospitals across the U.S. The statement concludes that, “while reducing the [federal] deficit is vital, cutting funding to medical research will have dire consequences for the quality of health care in the future and the development of life-saving medical advances. . . . America needs to invest more in medical research, not less. Cuts to NIH funding will delay medical progress and deny hope to millions of Americans.” For the full statement, visit the AAMC website at HTTPS://WWW.AAMC.ORG/INITIATIVES/RESEARCHMEANSHOPE/.

AAMC also announced the roll-out of a public service advertisement addressing the proposed reduction in research funding. To view the print ad, go to HTTPS://WWW.AAMC.ORG/DOWNLOAD/314284/DATA/RMHPRINTAD.PDF.
AACOM President Examines How Sequestration Will Affect Medical Education

In a special report, Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H., President of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), examines the impact on medical education of current and proposed efforts at debt reduction, including the looming sequestration cuts to the federal budget. As an example, Dr. Shannon points to a recent announcement by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) projecting that the Health Services and Resources Administration (HRSA) could see its funding cut by more than $600 million, thereby jeopardizing an array of health professions training programs that benefit medical students, including Title VII programs, the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), Community Health Centers and others. Furthermore, cuts to HRSA’s Title VII health professions programs related to primary care training would shrink an already inadequately funded program and make it even smaller.

For the full text of “How Will Our Nation’s Fiscal Debt and Sequestration Affect Osteopathic Medical Education?,” go to HTTP://WWW.AACOM.ORG/RESOURCES/E-NEWS/OME/2012-10/PAGES/PRESIDENT.ASPX.

Federal News

NIH Announces It Will Not Merge NIAAA and NIDA to Create a Single Addiction Institute

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has announced it will not pursue the proposed creation of a single institute devoted to substance use, abuse and addictions. The proposal would have dissolved the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), and replaced it with a single body.

NIH Director Francis Collins, M.D., Ph.D., announced the decision November 16, 2012, in a brief written statement that said: “After rigorous review and extensive consultation with stakeholders, I have concluded that it is more appropriate for NIH to pursue functional integration, rather than major structural reorganization, to advance substance use, abuse, and addiction-related research.

To that end, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) will retain their institutional identities, while strengthening their ongoing efforts to work more closely with each other and with related research programs at other institutes and centers.”

NIDA has an annual budget of $1 billion, while NIAAA’s budget is $459 million.

ACA Implementation Moves Ahead

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has published a series of proposed rules that would implement various provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In a statement released November 26th, HHS announced its proposed regulations on Health Insurance Exchanges, Essential Health Benefits, and Wellness Programs.

The proposed rule on “Standards Related to Essential Health Benefits, Actuarial Value, and Accreditation” outlines proposed standards for health insurance companies operating in the small group and individual markets (the rules do not address Medicaid programs). Comments are due by December 26, 2012.

A second proposed rule, “Health Insurance Market Rules; Rate Review,” is designed to prevent insurance companies from discriminating against persons with pre-existing conditions. Generally, insurers would be prohibited from denying coverage to individuals because of a pre-existing condition. Health insurers would be required to maintain a single statewide risk pool for each of their individual and small employer markets, except where a state decides to merge them into one pool. Comments on this proposed rule are due by December 26, 2012.

A third proposed rule, “Incentives for Nondiscriminatory Wellness Programs in Group Health Plans,” implements and expands employer wellness programs. Issued jointly by HHS and the Treasury Department, the rule establishes requirements to protect consumers from unfair practices when “health-contingent programs” are created by an employer. (Such programs generally require participants to meet a specific standard related to their health to obtain a reward.) Comments are due January 25, 2013. The proposed rules would become effective for plan years beginning on or after January 1, 2014.

Resources

ASAM Live Learning Center Offers Access to Course Content

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) offers a variety of online educational programs on its website (WWW.ASAM.ORG). For example, a 4-hour core training program on Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is designed to improve clinical skills in identifying and addressing substance use disorders through a focus on clinical coaching and interactive cases. Development of the program, which is approved for AMA PRA Category 1 credit, was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (no industry funding was involved). There is a $50 user fee; group rates are available. For more information, go to ASAM’s home page (WWW.ASAM.ORG) and click on “Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment” under the heading “Training.”
**Online Newsletter Focuses on Health Issues Related to Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use**

*Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Health: Current Evidence* is a free online newsletter produced by the Boston Medical Center in cooperation with the Boston University Schools of Medicine and Public Health. Editor Richard Saitz, M.D., M.P.H., FASAM, FACP (Boston University Schools of Medicine and Public Health) and co-editor David A. Fiellin, M.D. (Yale University School of Medicine) summarize recent articles about alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and abuse in the peer-reviewed literature, with a focus on the public health implications of the research findings. Most summaries are accompanied by a commentary from a leading expert on the topic.

*Alcohol, Other Drugs, and Health: Current Evidence* also features downloadable teaching presentations, a journal club, free CME credit for physicians, and special sections devoted to medical ethics and information about HIV and HCV as they relate to alcohol and other drug use.

Initially supported by a grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), the newsletter currently is supported by a grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

To learn more or to sign up for a free subscription to the newsletter, visit [HTTP://WWW.BU.EDU/AODHEALTH/EALERTS/](http://www.bu.edu/aodhealth/ealerts/).

**Free CME Course Addresses Use of Opioids in Managing Chronic Pain**

More than 12,000 physicians and other health care professionals have completed a Boston University School of Medicine course on “Safe and Effective Opioid Prescribing for Chronic Pain.” Developed with support from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine, the course offers primary care physicians and other health care professionals the knowledge they need to care for patients who are living with chronic pain, including learning how to define chronic pain, how to manage its treatment, the tools available to assess pain, the risks involved in prescribing opioids, and how to discontinue opioid treatment when necessary.

Each of the four course modules is approved for [AMA PRA Category 1 credit](http://www.opioidprescribing.com). New modules are released on an ongoing basis. There is no charge to register for the course, which can be accessed at [WWW.OPIOIDPRESCRIBING.COM](http://www.opioidprescribing.com).

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**In the Literature**

**FEATURE: As Open Access Explodes, How to Tell the Good from the Bad and the Ugly?**


Choosing the right journal has always been difficult, but the plethora of new open access journals—and the increasing pressure from funders to publish in them—has made the choice even more daunting. At a recent meeting, representatives of science funding agencies, publishers, librarians, and journal editors discussed two proposed yardsticks for quality. But the meeting, organized by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific research and SUrF, a partnership that provides information and communication technology to Dutch universities, failed to come up with clear answers.

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**Undergraduate Medical Education**


**Graduate Medical Education**


**Continuing Medical Education**


**Addiction Medicine**


**Cardiology**


**Obstetrics**


**Oncology**


**Pain Medicine**


Visit COPE on the web at WWW.COPE-ASSN.ORG
Pediatrics/Adolescent Medicine

Professional Health and Impairment

Prescribing Controlled Drugs/Prescription Drug Abuse

Psychiatry

Pulmonary Medicine
Kim TW, Samet JH. Co-morbidity is the norm, not the exception: Chronic respiratory diseases in chronic drug users. Prim Care Respir J. 2012 Nov 8 [Epub ahead of print].

Coming Events

AACOM: April 24-27, 2013
Marriott Waterfront Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland
HTTP://WWW.AACOM.ORG/EVENTS/ANNUALMTG/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX

SGIM: April 24-27, 2012
Society of General Internal Medicine
36th Annual Meeting:
Celebrating Generalism—Leading Innovation and Change
Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, Denver, Colorado
HTTP://WWW.SGIM.ORG/METINGS/ANNUAL-METING

ASAM: April 25-28, 2013
American Society of Addiction Medicine
44th Annual Medical-Scientific Conference
Hilton Chicago Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
HTTP://WWW.ASAM.ORG/EDUCATION/ANNUAL-MEDICAL-SCIENTIFIC-CONFERENCE

APA: May 18-22, 2013
American Psychiatric Association
166th Annual Meeting: Pursuing Wellness Across the Lifespan (The Abstract Submission Site will open November 1, 2012 for New Research, Young Investigator New Research, International, and Resident & Medical Student Competition posters.) HTTP://WWW.PSYCH.ORG/ANNUALMEETING

AMERSA: November 2013
Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse
37th Annual National Conference
[Date and location to be announced]
WWW.AMERSA.ORG

AAMC: November 2013
Association of American Medical Colleges
2013 Annual Meeting
[Date and location to be announced]
WWW.AAMC.ORG

Visit COPE on the web at WWW.CCOPE-ASN.ORG
About COPE

Mission and Goals

COPE — the Coalition on Physician Education in Substance Use Disorders, LLC—is a voluntary organization devoted to improving patient care and the public health by assuring that all physicians have access to the training and resources they need to prevent, identify, and provide specialty-appropriate interventions for patients who use tobacco or illicit drugs, or who engage in unhealthy use of alcohol or non-medical use of prescription medications. COPE is incorporated as a not-for-profit [501(c)(3)] corporation under the laws of the State of Connecticut.

COPE's activities involve identifying resources that support physician training and education, providing support and mentorship to medical school faculty and others who provide physician training, and seeking synergy across its members’ efforts. For example, COPE is collaborating with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) to build a network of faculty in U.S. allopathic and osteopathic medical schools who are responsible for teaching about substance use disorders, for the purposes of networking, mentoring and information-sharing.

Membership

To join COPE, register at the COPE website (WWW.COPE-ASSN.ORG). There is no membership fee.

To volunteer for a COPE committee: The Liaison Committee is composed of COPE members who represent COPE's mission and goals to specific organizations and the views of those organizations to COPE. (Liaison representatives are being sought for addiction specialty groups and societies representing physicians in a range of disciplines.

The Faculty Committee is composed of teaching faculty at U.S. allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, as identified through a project with AAMC and AACOM and brought together through a COPE-managed Listserv to share information and provide peer support.

Additional committees are convened by the Executive Committee as needed to address specific projects. If you see a need, propose a committee!

Executive Committee

David C. Lewis, M.D. (Chair)
Mark L. Kraus, M.D., FASAM (Co-Chair)
Anthony Dekker, D.O., FAOAAM, FASAM
J. Harry Isaacson, M.D.
John Renner, M.D., FAPA
Bonnie B. Wilford, M.S.
Stephen A. Wyatt, D.O.

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