COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN MEDICINE

POLICY 2024-04

PILOT POLICY ON BOARD SPONSORSHIP

FOR A FIFTH ATTEMPT AT USMLE STEP 3

September 26, 2024

On July 1, 2021, the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) reduced the number of total attempts allowed to an examinee taking Step 1, Step 2 CK or Step 3. Each examinee is now limited to 4 attempts per Step. Examinees who have attempted any USMLE Step four or more times without passing are ineligible to apply for completion of the USMLE examination sequence, with one exception. The exception allows a state medical board to request an additional administration in "unique and specific cases" in which the board feels strongly about doing so on behalf of an individual who "would be eligible for licensure in that state if they passed USMLE."

The Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine (Board) hereby adopts this policy to follow for an examinee who has failed Step 3[[1]](#footnote-1) and seeks the Board's sponsorship of a Fifth Attempt. An examinee must make a request for sponsorship for a Fifth Attempt to either the Executive Director of the Board or the Director of Licensing. The request must be made on a form provided by the Board.

In order to be eligible to request a Fifth Attempt, examines must:

* Demonstrate that “unique and specific” circumstances existing supporting their request.
* Show that they would meet the statutory requirements for licensure in Mass. Gen. Laws

c. 112 if they passed the exam on the fifth attempt;

* Submit a completed Request Form and Documentation;
* Not have any medical or physical condition that currently impairs the ability to practice medicine safely;
* Provide official examination scores;
* Verify medical school education;
* Verify postgraduate training, if any;
* Provide an NPDB report;
* Provide an ECFMG certificate, if applicable.

All requests for sponsorship shall be presented to either the Board's Licensing Committee, the Chair of the Board, or the Chair's designee, to approve or disapprove the Request. Granting a Request for sponsorship for a Fifth Attempt of Step 3 is within the discretion of the Board and the final determination to allow the Fifth Attempt will be made by the USMLE Composite Committee.

This policy shall remain in effect until October 31, 2025 or the Board rescinds this policy, whichever occurs sooner.

1. The Board will not sponsor requests for a fifth attempt of Steps 1 or 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)