GENERAL POST USMLE STEP I ADVICE

1. Relax.

There is absolutely no benefit from panicking. You are going to experience all kinds of negative emotions over the next few days: disbelief, frustration, anger, fear, embarrassment, sadness, etc. We strongly encourage you to seek support if you need help working through these emotions and/or to help you with anxiety or other factors that may impact your ability to study for the exam. Dr. Zito is available to meet with you and help connect you with services if you would like. Counseling services are available through Henderson Student Counseling. There is a direct line to call for UM students: (954)424-6868.

2. Logistics:

- Review the school’s USMLE Step 1 policies contained in the Medical Student Rights and Responsibilities 2020-2021 Handbook. You can find it at [https://med.miami.edu/medical-education/current-students/important-documents-for-students](https://med.miami.edu/medical-education/current-students/important-documents-for-students). Understand your obligations. If you need guidance or have questions, talk with Dr. Belkowitz. As per the handbook, you will be able to continue in rotations through the end of the third year core rotation blocks, but you will not be able to take another rotation prior to retaking your Step 1. Schedule blocks that you may use to retake the exam this academic year are winter block (12/7/20-1/3/21) and the last five-week block (5/24/21-6/27/21). Retake exams are not allowed during clerkships. Please review the handbook for the full details.
- Review the policies regarding re-taking the exam on the USMLE website at [http://www.usmle.org](http://www.usmle.org). Please be sure to contact the NBME to find out the financial and scheduling implications and to assure you have a date to take the examination.

3. Reflect

Why did you fail? You need to try and figure out the reason(s) why you didn’t pass. Has your academic record been weak? Did you put in sufficient time and effort? Did you study properly? Were the resources you used appropriate? Did you utilize a program (Kaplan, DIT, etc), study with others, or study on your own? Did you do practice exams to assess your preparation for the real thing?

Determine a reasonable amount of time you will need to prepare for re-examination. In part this will depend on how close your score was to passing. If you failed with a 180-193, then 4-6 weeks of study should be sufficient. If you failed with a lower score you are probably going to need more time. If you were far off (less than 165) you may need to consider taking off more than 8 weeks.

Develop a plan of study. Review your results. What were your strengths and weaknesses? What subjects will you need to focus on? How are you going to assess your preparation for reexamination? Consider working with Dr. Reynolds, the learning specialist here at UMMSM.

Consider a formal program. There are a number of programs that assist students who have failed the boards, including online programs, local programs and away programs.
Once you have a plan and a timeline, register with the NBME and request an appropriate 3-month window.

Avoid the urge to seek advice from multiple people. All too often students start asking multiple deans and faculty what to do. This can become confusing and time consuming. Pick an advisor you trust and go with their advice.