

**From:** Zehle, Christa H

**Sent:** Friday, August 31, 2018 9:14 AM

**To:** LCOM Class Of 2019 List <[classof2019@med.uvm.edu](mailto:classof2019@med.uvm.edu)>

**Subject:** Information about the Texas STAR (Seeking Transparency in Application to Residency) survey data for applying for residency

**Importance:** High

Dear Class of 2019 students,

As many of you are aware, the Texas STAR (Seeking Transparency in Application to Residency) survey was developed to assist medical students in obtaining information to guide them with residency specialty and program selection. LCOM class of 2018 students participated in the survey this past spring (April 2018) and had an excellent response rate to the survey (best response rate from any of the 72 schools participating in the survey!). However the national response rate was significantly lower. After careful review of the data with our research colleagues in the Teaching Academy, Office of Medical Student leadership and students from the class of 2019, I have decided that providing LCOM students access to this data is not in the best interest of our students. Please see the attached communication letter from your classmates and Association of American Medical Colleges Organization of Student Representatives (AAMC OSR) LCOM representatives, Brian Rosen '19 and Kate Anderson '19. For additional information to assist you with the residency application process, we encourage you to review the [NRMP Interactive Charting Outcomes](#). We are hopeful that the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the national and regional Group on Student Affairs (GSA) members will continue to address concerns regarding the residency application process to improve the process for and the wellbeing of our students. We will continue to review the resources available and certainly will consider future participation in the Texas STAR survey to obtain additional data if felt to be a valuable endeavor. Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance.

Kind regards and best wishes with the residency application process if you are participating in ERAS / NRMP this year!

Christa Zehle, MD

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Pronouns: She/Her

Dear Class of 2019,

As the 2019 representatives to the AAMC, Dr. Zehle asked us to comment on the utility of the Texas STAR (Seeking Transparency in Application to Residency) data for residency program preparation and selection. The Texas STAR Program was started by the University of Texas Southwestern's Office of Student Affairs to combat the lack of program specific information available for each specialty. The Texas STAR Program collects self-reported data from individual US allopathic NRMP applicants for use as a reference. The data includes metrics such as USMLE scores, programs applied to, whether or not the applicant matched etc. This year the program was expanded beyond Texas and UVM decided to take part.

We are all discovering that the residency application process relies on a complex interplay of many factors, the importance of which are different for each specialty. Often, we are depending on the advice of specialty advisors without any real ability to see hard data. As such, we were hopeful that this data would be the key to solving many of our residency related anxieties. Unfortunately, we found that because of current limitations in the data, the program actually led to more uncertainty. In agreement with Dr. Zehle, it was decided that the Texas STAR data would not be made available for our class.

The information provided in the Texas STAR data is by self-report only, meaning that ultimately the authenticity of the data is questionable. To check the reliability of the data, we spot checked the aggregate specialty data provided by Texas STAR to the data available through the NRMP. We found that the self-reported Texas STAR data was at times significantly different from the available official data. One reason for this discrepancy is most likely sample bias. Many schools across the country had response rates as low as 30 – 40%, making the results hard to generalize. Having only one year of data further confounds this problem. The program-specific data suffered especially hard from these issues. The large number of residency programs in the country and the small number of students in the survey who applied to each made the program level data untrustworthy.

Given these major concerns with the integrity of the data, we had a difficult choice to make. Is no data better than flawed data? In this case we decided it was. Ultimately, it was decided that the data would cause increased anxiety without any real payoff. The [NRMP Interactive Charting Outcomes](#) of the match website, recently published directly from the NRMP, made this decision easier. We believe the NRMP program is a more reliable source which accomplishes many of the aims that the Texas STAR set out to achieve. This tool can be found at <http://www.nrmp.org/interactive-charting-outcomes-in-the-match/>.

Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any other questions about this decision.

- Brian Rosen (Brian.rosen@med.uvm.edu)
- Kate Anderson (Kathryn.L.Anderson@med.uvm.edu)