

# Workshop 96

## An Overview of ECFMG – FAIMER & International Medical Graduates in Family Medicine Training

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## Disclosure Statement

No Conflict of Interest to Report

# Learning Objectives

- ✓ Comprehend ECFMG's role, services and resources available to GME programs and IMGs
- ✓ Understand the requirements for IMGs and foreign national physicians to enter and progress through U.S. GME
- ✓ Identify key internal policies that help to ensure regulatory compliance and successful training of IMG residents

# Agenda

- ▶ A Review of ECFMG's Role, Programs and Services
- ▶ Recruiting IMGs and Foreign National Physicians
  - Requirements, timelines and immigration options
- ▶ ECFMG J-1 Visa Sponsorship
  - Regulations, roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Best Practices
  - Selection, orientation, training, and well-being
- ▶ Discussion



Private, non-profit organization  
Founded in 1956

***To assess the readiness for IMGs to enter U.S. GME***

Organizational Members

- American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
- Association for Hospital Medical Education (AHME)
- Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB)
- National Medical Association (NMA)

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**“Improving world health through excellence in medical education...”**

U.S. Programs

- **ECFMG Certification**
- ECFMG Certificate Holders Office (ECHO)
- **ERAS Support Services**
- **Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)**
- Certification Verification Services (CVS)

International Programs

- Electronic Portfolio of International Credentials (EPIC)
- Global Educational Exchange in Medicine & the Health Professions (GEMx)
- Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER)

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# International Medical Graduate (IMG)

- ▶ **Definition:** An international medical graduate (IMG) is *any* physician who received his/her basic medical degree from a medical school outside of the United States or Canada, regardless of country of citizenship.

- ✓ The location of the medical school, not the citizenship of the physician, determines whether the graduate is an IMG.

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# Recruitment and Training of IMGs

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# Current ECFMG Certification Requirements

## ► Medical Education Credentials

- Completion of medical school curriculum of at least 4 years
- School and graduation year listed in the *Sponsor Notes* tab of the WDMS\*
- Primary-source verification of medical diploma and transcript(s) by ECFMG

## ► USMLE Exams

- Step 1 Basic Science
- Step 2 Clinical Knowledge (CK)
- Step 2 Clinical Skills (CS)

\*World Directory of Medical Schools (World Directory)  
[www.wdoms.org](http://www.wdoms.org)

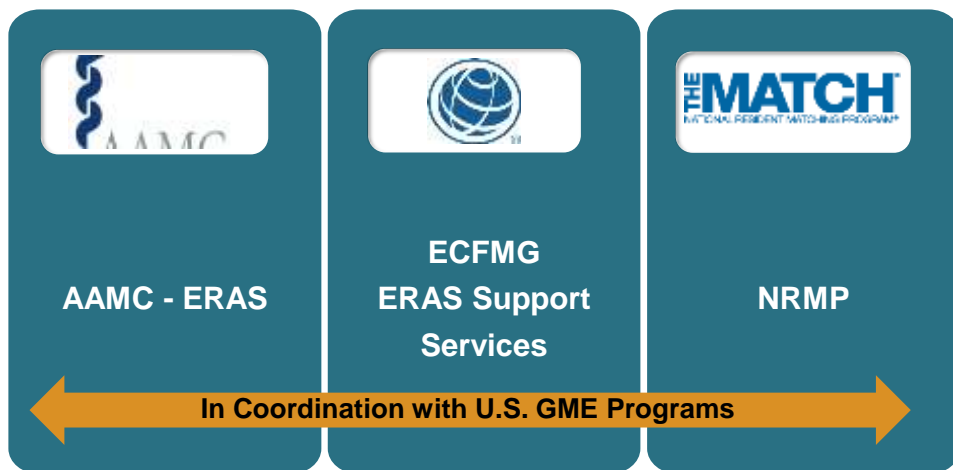
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# Entry into U.S. GME

Process	Timeframe
<b>Complete medical school</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pass U.S. Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE)</li> <li>• <i>Step 1, Step 2 CK, Step 2 CS</i></li> <li>✓ <i>If IMG, complete ECFMG Certification</i></li> </ul>	May Previous year/s
<b>Complete residency application process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)</li> <li>• Program Interviews etc.</li> <li>• <b>National Residency Matching Program (NRMP) “The Match”</b></li> </ul>	August - February September - February <b>March</b>
<b>Program issues GME contract/letter of offer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>If foreign national, secure appropriate visa status</i></li> </ul>	March – April March - July
<b>Residency training – academic year in medicine</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation</li> </ul>	<b>July 1- June 30</b> Mid-June

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## IMGs and Application to U.S. GME



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## U.S. Immigration & Participation in U.S. GME

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# Foreign National Physicians in U.S. GME

International Medical Graduates	U.S. Graduates	Canadian Graduates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ECFMG Certificate</b></li> <li>• <b>Visa / visa status</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma, USMLE and/or COMLEX</li> <li>• <b>Visa / visa status</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma, MCEE and/or USMLE</li> <li>• <b>Visa / visa status</b></li> </ul>

Most common visa options for GME: J-1, H-1B, J-2 w/employment authorization (EAD)  
**ECFMG is the sole sponsor of J-1 physicians**

## Basic J-1 and H-1B Requirements

	J-1 Exchange Visitor Physician	H-1B "Specialty Occupation Worker"
Regulatory Oversight	<p><b>ECFMG</b>                      Department of State <b>22CFR§62.27(b)</b>                      &amp; Department of Homeland Security  <i>SEVIS tracking</i>  <b>(Student &amp; Exchange Visitor Information System)</b></p>	<p>Department of Labor                      Department of Homeland Security</p>
Credentials and Examinations	<p><b>ECFMG Certification</b>                      USMLE Steps 1, 2CK, 2CS</p>	<p><b>ECFMG Certification</b>                      USMLE Steps 1, Step 2CK, Step 2CS, <b>Step 3</b></p>
Time Limit	<b>7 years maximum</b>	<b>6 years maximum</b>
Funding	Generally hospital salary or * home government/other	U.S. employer salary only
Subject to 2 year Return Home Obligation* CFR§212 (e) INA	<p><b>"Statement of Need"</b> from home Ministry of Health  <i>*Must fulfill 2 yrs. in home country to be eligible for H-1B, L visas or any permanent residence status</i></p>	<b>No service requirement</b>
Work Permit for spouse employment authorization (EAD)	J-2 dependents can apply for EAD	Generally, H-4 cannot work
Processing Time/Fees	\$325 - ECFMG, \$180 - SEVIS Paid by physician	Filing fees, anti-Fraud (paid by employer), premium processing etc.

# Minimal J-1 Physician Requirements



Adequate prior education



ECFMG Certification (for IMGs)



GME contract or letter of offer



“Statement of Need” from home country Ministry of Health\*

*\*Home country is defined as the country of most recent legal permanent residence*

# J-1 Visa Sponsorship: Roles & Responsibilities



Designated Institutional Official (DIO)

Training Program Liaison (TPL)

Program Director Coordinator

J-1 Physician



ECFMG

Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP)

Regional Advisor



U.S. Department of State (DOS)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
Student & Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS)





# ECFMG J-1 Sponsorship On-line Application

- Training Types:
  - ACGME-accredited base residency training
  - ACGME-accredited subspecialty/fellowship training
  - Non-standard programs (*advanced cutting edge fellowships*)
- On-line Application initiated by the Training Program Liaison (TPL)
- **Renewed annually based on the GME Contract**

<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/application-checklists.html>

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## J-1 Required Reporting

Program Directors and Coordinators must work with the Training Program Liaisons (TPL) to ensure required reporting to ECFMG. These include:

✓ Notification of new J-1 arrivals and any visa delays or denials

✓ Completion of required forms, when applicable

- **Leaves of Absence** (<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/notification-LOA.pdf>)
- **Off-site Rotations** (<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/notification-off-site-rotation.pdf>)
- **Dismissals** (<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/early-dismissal-form.pdf>)
- **Resignation** (<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/notification-resignation.pdf>)

✓ Proposed contract amendments (start date, training level, etc)

✓ Serious incidents or allegations

- **Incident or Allegation Reporting form** (<http://www.ecfm.org/evsp/incident-report-tpl.pdf>)

# Important J-1 Policy Notes

## No Moonlighting

J-1 regulations **do not permit** activity and/or financial compensation outside of the defined parameters of the approved training program.

- ECFMG sponsorship authorizes a specific residency or fellowship training activity and associated compensation as documented on Form DS-2019
- No additional training or employment is permitted

## J-1 Waivers

J-1 physicians who receive a DoS waiver recommendation **are not eligible** for an extension of ECFMG sponsorship for any training activity beyond the end date of the most recent Form DS-2019.

- Only extensions to prepare and sit for an ABMS board exam are permitted

# EVSP Support for J-1 Physicians

- ✓ Access to TPL at the host institution and an EVSP Regional Advisor
- ✓ Pre-arrival orientation materials and acculturation resources
- ✓ On-going webinars - policy updates, travel, applications renewal etc.
- ✓ Resources on cross-cultural activities
- ✓ Open phone lines
- ✓ Email support @ [evsp-support@ecfm.org](mailto:evsp-support@ecfm.org)
- ✓ Confidential reporting / advising with EVSP senior staff
- ✓ Health, safety and welfare checks
- ✓ Meet and greet opportunities with ECFMG staff



# Best Practices for IMG Recruitment and Training

*Teaching Hospital / DIO  
Program Director and Coordinator  
Training Program Liaison (TPL)*



*IMG / Foreign National Physician*



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## Planning for the Incoming PGY1 Resident *Critical Issues and Timelines*

### **Recruitment**

- ERAS application, interview, selection

### **Credential Check**

- Diploma/transcript, USMLEs, ECFMG Certificate, medical license

### **Immigration**

- Applicant's U.S. immigration history
- Internal visa policies/procedures/ coordination/ oversight - ECFMG/J-1, H-1B, other
- Resident must apply for and secure "visa status" to begin training on time

### **Program Start**

- Arrival, Orientation, On-boarding
- Obtain Social Security, drivers license
- Confirm J-1 required medical / accident insurance

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## The Continuing Resident: *Critical Issues and Timelines*

### **Academic Milestones**

- Evaluations, progression in training, USMLE Step 3

### **Required Reporting**

- Remediation, leaves of absence, proposed changes etc.

### **Maintaining/Renewing Visa Status**

- Application to ECFMG for J-1 visa sponsorship, extension for other statuses
  - ✓ J-1 physicians with DOS waiver recommendation **are not eligible** for a training extension

### **Wellness**

- Cultural adjustment, family etc.

## Summary and Discussion

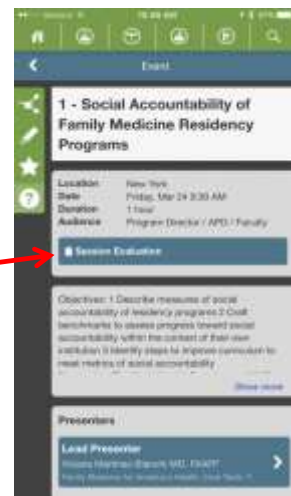
# Immigration Update and Outlook for AY2018-19

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Please  
complete the  
session evaluation.

Thank you.



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ECFMG Expert Resource, Collaborative Partner on IMGs Issues

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