

Commentary: IMGs should be encouraged to go into pediatrics, join AAP

June 3, 2016

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Article type: [Commentary](#)

Topics: [Medical Education](#)

The 2016 Residency Match was another successful one for our specialty. It also was particularly good for international medical graduates (IMGs). Nearly 33% of those who matched in pediatrics are IMGs, up from 29.5% last year.

Overall, IMGs have continued to do well in the match for over a decade now. The number of IMGs applying for first-year residency positions in all specialties increased by 3.3% from 2015 to 2016, and those who matched increased by 5.3%.

While this is good news for IMGs, especially those interested in pediatrics, some of the expected trends are not as encouraging for IMGs unless the number of first-year training positions increases. IMGs fill a critical need by working in underserved and inner-city areas that may not be as attractive to U.S. medical graduates (USMGs). A stagnant number of open training positions could have a negative impact on pediatric care, which already faces a lack of pediatric specialists.

“Without an increase in GME (graduate medical education) positions, it is likely that the increased competition for the limited number of GME positions will decrease the opportunities for international medical graduates (IMGs) to enter GME training ...which has several implications for the physician workforce,” according to the AAP policy statement *Financing Graduate Medical Education to Meet the Needs of Children and the Future Pediatrician Workforce* (<http://bit.ly/1T19jLI>).

Fewer IMGs also could be a setback for keeping up with the rapidly growing diversity of the U.S. population. Although U.S. medical schools are doing a much better job in making their student bodies more diverse, USMG diversity is not keeping up with the changing diversity of the U.S. population. IMGs will fill the diversity gap much quicker than USMGs can.

The Academy has always been a leader in diversity and acceptance. Our president-elect Fernando Stein, M.D., FAAP, is an IMG. It is important that IMGs play their part in supporting the Academy and its mission. If you are an IMG and an AAP member, consider joining the Provisional Section on International Medical Graduates. If you are not an AAP member, become one.

More IMGs are becoming pediatricians, so let's welcome them and encourage them to join and be active in the Academy.

Dr. Rathore is a member of the AAP Provisional Section on International Medical Graduates Executive Committee.

Resources

- [Join the Academy](#)
- [Information on the AAP Provisional Section on International Medical Graduates](#)

