INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATE (IMG) GUIDE

2025

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INTRODUCTION

The IMG road to medical licensure can be arduous. Although information about specific successful criteria for gaining residency is not published nor offered directly by program directors, this document has been developed based on trends and the experiences of IMGs who have matched to Canada in recent years. Through this guide, we hope to provide some tips and guidance for IMGs to successfully match into residency (and eventually get licensed to practice medicine independently).

DISCLAIMER

- No organization can guarantee your success; we serve only to provide advice.
- We DO NOT provide observership/rotations/research positions directly. Please read below for more information on obtaining Canadian clinical experience.
- Please read this document thoroughly before directing your questions to the Muslim Medical Association of Canada.
- We have no affiliation with any medical organization, residency program, or advisory group.
- Timelines and criteria for residency, exams, and licensure requirements are subject to change.

HELPFUL LINKS

- **CaRMS**: https://www.carms.ca/program-descriptions/

- **HealthForceOntario (Advisory Group)**: https://www.healthforceontario.ca/en/Home/All_Programs
    - This is a great organization, funded by the Ministry of Ontario, which specializes in advising IMG's about career options and matching into residency. They provide a wide range of services including helping with your resume/CV, mock interviews, and info sessions/presentations. Please see their website for more information (linked here is information for internationally educated physicians on becoming qualified for independent practice)

- **Internationally Trained Physicians of Ontario (ITPO)**: https://www.itpo.ca/
    - ITPO supports IMGs by providing workshops, webinars, and resources to help them navigate their professional journey and build meaningful connections. They also advocate for initiatives like a Practice Ready Assessment program in Ontario.

- **Alberta International Medical Graduate Association (AIMGA)**: https://aimga.ca/
    - A non-profit organization dedicated to supporting International Medical Graduates (IMGs) across Canada, not just those in Alberta. They provide essential resources and programs to help IMGs integrate into the Canadian healthcare system. Their offerings include access to high-cost resources like question banks, NAC OSCE preparation sessions, question-solving lectures, and interview coaching. They also help IMGs who are interested in alternative career pathways and help build professional connections. Their ultimate goal is to enhance Canadian healthcare through the successful re-engagement of IMGs.

- **Canada's Portal for Residency Program Promotion (CanPREPP)**
  https://canprepp.ca/information-for-international-medical-graduates-imgs/

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRST ITERATION

Please see the following link for details:
https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/#1686684285912-c058262f-ef92

To participate in the CaRMS (Canadian Residency Matching Service) match, you must:

1) **Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident**
    - Even those who attended Canadian Medical Schools abroad are ineligible to participate in the CaRMS match unless they have a PR or citizenship.

2) **Be a medical student or graduate in the process of obtaining a medical degree by July 1st of the match year from an institution listed with the World Directory of Medical Schools**
    - World Directory of Medical Schools (published by the Foundation of the Advancement of Medical Education and Research – FAIMER): https://www.wdoms.org/

3) **Have written and passed the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Exam (MCCQE) part 1 and National Assessment Collaboration Examination (NAC)** - details below under *'Exams'*

4) **Meet the language requirements**
    - If you went to a school where English or French was the primary language of instruction, you already meet the language requirement. If not, you will need to complete any **ONE** of the following:
        - *International English Testing System (IELTS)* with a minimum score of 7 in each component
        - *TOEFL-iBT* - passing score of 93 including a minimum score of 24 on the speaking test
        - *OET* (now accepted in almost all provinces) - it is specifically for doctors, and the writing section consists of writing a referral letter, which is very beneficial in the long term.
        - A pass result in French proficiency test administered by the Collège des Médecins du Québec
    - **NOTE:** The language requirements for CaRMS vary depending on the program and province. Applicants should review program descriptions to find lists of acceptable language options. You may be able to use an attestation letter if the language of instruction was the same as the program's language.

5) **Have never completed any Canadian or US postgraduate training**
    - Preliminary training in the US is considered accredited postgraduate training for the purposes of the R-1 match first iteration eligibility
    - If you have completed some postgraduate training in the US or Canada, you can only participate in the second iteration of the match

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SECOND ITERATION

The second iteration is open to candidates who fall into any of the following categories:

- Unmatched candidates after the first iteration
- Applicants who participated in the first iteration but withdrew an application
- Applicants who did not participate in the first iteration in any way
- Applicants who are only eligible for the second iteration based on provincial criteria and previous postgraduate training (in the US or Canada)

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

MOST PROVINCES

IMGs must have all their required documents verified through
https://mcc.ca/credentials-and-services/services/

- Proof of legal status (e.g. notarized copy of birth certificate, Canadian passport, record of landing or PR Card by an authority in Canada)
- Proof of medical diploma (MD/MBBS)
    - Documents not in English must be accompanied by a notarized translation
    - Students applying in their last year of medical school will need to submit their most recent marks/transcripts and will need to provide proof of their MD/MBBS to the relevant College (e.g. CPSO for Ontario) prior to the start of residency training

QUEBEC

- To be eligible to apply to programs in Quebec, you must have your documents verified through College des medecins du Quebec and obtain Lettre de reconnaissance de l'équivalence du diplôme MD prior to applying to Carms
- Passing https://cedis.ca/en/index.php is highly recommended
- Please note that McGill (Montreal) is the only English teaching site

ALBERTA

Alberta has different requirements. The applicant must be living there. See the following links for details:

- https://www.aimg.ca/
- https://carms.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/115004168506-I-am-an-IMG-but-I-cannot-see-the-programs-I-want-to-apply-to-in-the-list-of-available-programs

PROVINCE-SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS

Please see the following links for an overview of eligibility criteria for each respective province:

- **Newfoundland and Labrador** *(Memorial University of Newfoundland)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/newfoundland-and-labrador/
- **Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island** *(Dalhousie University)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/nova-scotia-new-brunswick-pei/
- **Quebec** *(Universite Laval, Universite de Sherbrooke, Universite de Montreal, McGill University)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/quebec/
  Passing of the CEDIS, highly recommended. See details https://www.cedis.ca/
- **Ontario** *(University of Ottawa, Queen's University, NOSM University, University of Toronto, Toronto Metropolitan University, McMaster University, Western University)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/ontario/
- **Manitoba** *(University of Manitoba)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/manitoba/
- **Saskatchewan** *(University of Saskatchewan)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/saskatchewan/
- **Alberta** *(University of Alberta, University of Calgary)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/alberta/
- **British Columbia** *(University of British Columbia)*: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/british-columbia/

IMPORTANT CARMS LINKS

- Summary of citizenship requirements: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/r-1-summary-of-citizenship-requirements/
- Summary of MCC examination requirements: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/r-1-summary-of-mcc-examination-requirements/
- Summary of language proficiency requirements: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/r-1-summary-of-language-proficiency-requirements/
- Summary of eligibility for practicing physicians: https://www.carms.ca/match/r-1-main-residency-match/eligibility-criteria/r-1-summary-of-eligibility-for-practicing-physicians/

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROVINCE-SPECIFIC CRITERIA

INTAKE CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES BY PROVINCE

Province	First Iteration	Positions	Return of Service	Second Iteration	Positions	Return of Service
Newfoundland	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Competitive	Yes
Nova Scotia	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Competitive	Yes
Quebec	Yes	Competitive	No	Yes	Competitive	No
Ontario	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Parallel	Yes
Manitoba	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Parallel/Competitive	Yes
Saskatchewan	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Competitive	Yes
Alberta	Yes	Parallel	No	Yes	Parallel	No
British Columbia	Yes	Parallel	Yes	Yes	Competitive	Yes

POSITION TYPES

- Parallel: IMGs apply to separate positions than Canadian graduates in at least one discipline
- Competitive: IMGs apply to the same positions as Canadian graduates in all disciplines

RETURN OF SERVICE (ROS) AGREEMENTS

ROS agreements are specific for IMG positions; therefore, a CMG matching to an IMG position will also have an ROS. Similarly, an IMG matching to a CMG position will not have a ROS attached to their offer.

- **Newfoundland/Nova Scotia** – The RIS (return in service) contract has been developed jointly by the four Atlantic Provinces and incorporates a length of return of service equal to the number of years the physician spent in his/her residency training program
- **Quebec/Alberta** – No return of service
- **Ontario** – IMGs who accept a residency position must provide five years of full-time service in an eligible community (anywhere in Ontario except Ottawa, Toronto, Pickering, Markham, Vaughan, Brampton and Mississauga)
- **Manitoba** – Length of term dependent on residency but the IMG will practice medicine in medically underserved areas in Manitoba for return of service
- **Saskatchewan** – Year for year return of service (equivalent to the number of years spent in the residency training program)
- **British Columbia** – Return of service for two years in underserved areas of British Columbia

EXAMS

REQUIRED EXAMS

1. NAC OSCE

- **Purpose:** Assesses clinical skills and communication.
- **Format:** Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) with ~12 stations (~11 minutes per station).
- **Timing:** half-day exam, offered twice a year (May, September).
- **Resources:** MCC NAC Practice Tests, Toronto Notes, Edmonton Manual
- **NOTE:** Practice! Practice! Practice! Find study partners and start practicing early

2. MCCQE Part 1

- **Purpose**: Tests medical knowledge and clinical reasoning.
  NOTE: The higher the score, the better the prospects of matching into residency. There is no known cut-off for this exam.
- **Format (starting April 2025):**
  - 1-day exam (~6.5 hours)
  - Multiple-choice questions (no CDM component as of April 2025).
- **Resources:**
  - Highly recommended to do most, if not all preparatory products on the official website
  - UWorld (step 2 CK) for MCCQE: helps understand baseline concepts
  - Canada QBank
  - Toronto Notes
  - Canada Task Force for up-to-date information on screening guidelines

3. English Language Proficiency (If Applicable)

- IELTS or TOEFL or OET (please see page 4 for details)

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

a) **Be organized!**

- Check deadlines: ensure you register for exams well before the application deadlines.
- Document preparation: keep your exam results and supporting documents ready for CaRMS submission.

b) **Start early:** Begin preparation and document verification 12-18 months before applying.

c) **Use the available study resources (see above):** leverage MCC practice exams, preparatory courses, and study groups.

d) **Practice communication skills:** especially important for NAC OSCE.

e) **Seek guidance:** Join IMG support networks or consult mentors familiar with the CaRMS process.

FAQs

- **Should I do my USMLE exams?**
  USMLE is a recognised assessment in the U.S. It is generally not accepted as a substitute for the MCCQE Part I in CaRMS. However, USMLE scores may support your application as an IMG in demonstrating clinical knowledge. You can add the scores in the CARMS application, and the exams could be done as a backup if you are planning to apply to the USA!

- **What resources should I use to prepare?**
  Please see above under each respective exam for a list of recommended resources.

MEDICAL ELECTIVES AND OBSERVERSHIPS

MEDICAL ELECTIVES

Applications can be submitted through the AFMC Student Portal, a process typically available to students in the final two years of medical school. **It is advisable to initiate the application process at least 8 to 10 months prior to the desired elective dates.** Doing an elective serves as an excellent opportunity to gain Canadian experience, particularly in the area of intended practice. For example, for those aspiring to a career in Family Medicine in Ontario, it is beneficial to pursue rotations at a Family Medicine clinic within the province.

How Do I Find Electives?

- AFMC student portal
- Contact medical school coordinators for available rotation spots in areas of interest
- Visit the websites of the various medical schools and search for "clinical elective rotations". You can often arrange rotations on your own by contacting this department. The application may require you to submit scores, CV/resume, school information, and vaccination documentation, etc.
    a. **NOTE:** There may be a wait time for a position, so start this process early!
- All medical schools also have a "postgraduate medical education" website. Under this PGME portion of the site, you may be able to find "clinical elective" rotation information for the various specialties

OBSERVERSHIPS

Observerships are usually performed after you have graduated from medical school and allow you to get exposure to Canadian healthcare.

- **How do I get observerships?**
  The PGME (see above) sites of all medical schools usually have information about observerships and contact information. Similar to rotations, an application process is required.

- **How are observerships different from clinical rotations? Is one better than the other?**
  Observerships are limited in that usually, the observer is not permitted to do hands-on work with patients (i.e., physical exam). Some hospitals also require that the observer may only be in the room with a patient when the supervisor is present. These rules, however, vary. Hospitals often mandate specific rules. Thus, the exposure and nature of the observership may vary depending on one's site location.

- **Clinical rotations (electives) vs observerships**
  All medical trainees do clinical rotations as part of their medical school curriculum, which is beneficial as it allows for hands-on management of patients. If you can do an elective in Canada, this is definitely worthwhile. However, if this is not possible, it is still worth your time to do observerships wherever available.

- **Do program directors look highly on observerships?**
  The greatest value of observerships is gaining experience in a Canadian setting. It allows you to observe and understand the interactions and nature of healthcare in Canada. Also, it's another opportunity to get a letter of reference.
    - Of note, licensed observerships offered in BC are valued all over Canada and are approved by CPSBC

- https://www.cpsbc.ca/registrants/current-registrants/registration-and-licensing/img/clinical-observer

CLINICAL ASSISTANT

The Clinical Assistant role offers IMGs a valuable opportunity to gain hands-on clinical experience under supervision. In provinces such as Alberta and Nova Scotia, there are structured pathways where IMGs can participate in patient care within their scope of practice. These positions are approved and regulated by provincial medical authorities, including Alberta Health Services (AHS) through the Alberta Clinical and Surgical Assistant Program (ACSAP) and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS). Although Clinical Assistants cannot serve as the Most Responsible Physician (MRP), these roles provide essential exposure to the Canadian healthcare system, which can enhance future residency applications.

Additionally, IMGs can find Clinical Assistant job opportunities in other provinces through job sites like LinkedIn/Indeed or through personal connections. However, these roles are not licensed and may not hold the same value as the licensed positions in Alberta and Nova Scotia. They can still be beneficial as to gain local Canadian experience and connections with Canadian physicians, and may be easier to secure (as hospitals often have more requirements and paperwork)

Links to Licensed Clinical Assistant Positions per Province:

- **Nova Scotia:** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia offers a Clinical Assistant Licence for eligible candidates: Nova Scotia Physicians & Surgeons
- **Manitoba:** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba provides guidelines for Clinical Assistants, including registration requirements and assessment processes. More details are available at: Manitoba Physicians & Surgeons
- **New Brunswick:** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick outlines pathways to licensure for Clinical Assistants: Cpsnb
- **Newfoundland and Labrador:** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador has a Clinical Assistant Licence Policy detailing eligibility and practice requirements: CPSNL
- **Alberta:** The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta offers limited practice registration for Clinical or Surgical Assistants: CPSA

VOLUNTEERING AND RESEARCH

VOLUNTEERING

If you are unable to do clinical electives or observerships, then you can show programs your commitment to gaining Canadian experience by volunteering in any healthcare setting. All hospitals have a volunteer department that you can contact and put forth an application for. Although this is certainly not as hands-on as clinical rotations, again, something is always better than nothing! The experience can help during interviews or when writing personal statements.

We would recommend initiating this process as early as possible.

RESEARCH

Research is always looked upon favourably. Most residents are required to be involved in research and the various medical organizations pride themselves on their evidence/research-based means of practice. If you ever have a chance to be involved in research, try to do it, especially if it leads to being published in a journal. Listing your publications in your application sets you apart from most IMG applicants

- **How do I get research positions?** – Contact the research department of medical schools and look at the list of various current projects. Contact the research coordinators and ask to volunteer in the project. Some may or may not require previous research/statistical skills/epidemiology and experience.
- **Personal contacts** – Many physicians you know are actively involved in research. You may ask them if they need volunteers to help gather data, and thus, be a part of the project.
- **Pharmaceutical companies** -- They conduct a lot of lab work and research. You can always go on the websites of various pharmaceutical companies to see if opportunities arise, in addition to contacting your personal friends you may have in the pharmaceutical business. Newspapers and biotechnical programs (in universities and online) may also post opportunities.
- **What kind of research?** – Although anything related to your specific field of interest is ideal, being involved in any kind of medical/clinical research may be of benefit to your application.
- The **National Institute of Health** (USA) posts research jobs here: http://www.jobs.nih.gov/vacancies/scientific/

WRITING AN APPLICATION

When submitting your application, whether it be to CaRMS or US programs, ensure the following:

a) **Have your application reviewed by a trusted colleague/mentor/expert.** HealthForceOntario and/or your personal friends who are familiar with the process are good examples.

b) **Personal statement** – Make it stand out. Do not use generic templates. It's a competitive process. Focus on your unique experiences, motivations and goals. Make it program-specific where possible

c) **Letter of reference** – Ask for letters at every opportunity you can. Most programs want recent letters (i.e., within 12 months of application). Even if your letter is from beyond 12 months, one can take the letter back to the preceptor to merely update the issue date on the letter. This option is much easier than waiting several months/years to get a fresh new letter, when the preceptor probably doesn't remember their time with you anymore. Ensure the letter focuses on your experience in Canadian/US healthcare, if possible.
    - Ideally, you should get letters from clinical rotation supervisors. However, if not available, get them from whoever supervised your observership/volunteer experiences or employers.
    - *It is valuable to get references from your med school from the same specialty as well - even if abroad.

d) **Canadian experience** – As much as possible, highlight your Canadian experiences in healthcare (be it rotations, in your statement, volunteering, etc.)

e) **IMG "friendly" programs** – When researching programs, look to see if the program shows the bios of their current residents. If the program has a lot of IMGs, it's considered an IMG "friendly" program and worth applying to!

NETWORKING AND INTERVIEWS

NETWORK

If there is a chance to meet program directors (i.e., HealthForceOntario events, etc.), or physicians involved in residency programs, do it. Networking is an important skill to have in all job fields. You never know, the people you make a good impression with may end up being the people who interview you!

INTERVIEWS

If you are successful in getting interviews:

- **Wardrobe and environment** – Make sure your suit/outfit is professional. For virtual interviews, ensure your camera is well-positioned, the room is well-lit, and that you're connected to a high-speed network
- **English** – Try your best to master the English language, even if it means taking external courses to improve your ability to speak English
- **Be personable** – Residency program directors are not only medical physicians, but like you, they also have a life outside of medicine. Being able to relate to and adapt to any form of conversation is a definite asset (i.e. if you interview in a particular city, know about their culture, local events, sports, etc.)
- **Be nice to everyone you interact with throughout the interview process** - This includes the administrative staff, the people interviewing you, and residents of the program
- **Know your audience** – Before going to an interview, get to know the interviewers and program as much as possible. Research the program, their staff, the projects they are involved in, and the surrounding city and culture.
- **Have insightful questions to ask** – At the end of most interviews, you are given a chance to ask questions. Ask questions that are thoughtful and show that you really want to be a part of the program (ideally, your question should not be something for which the answer could easily be found on the CaRMS website). This is also a golden opportunity (albeit a short amount of time) to tell them about any other of your other admirable attributes that would make you an asset to their team.
- **PRACTICE your interview skills** - HealthForceOntario hosts mock interviews, but you must apply early as spots get filled up quickly. Also, make use of your friends/family/colleagues to help you prepare for interviews.
- **Attend our annual workshop if your schedule allows** - MMAC hosts annual workshops where you can do mock interviews in a small group with Canadian residents and staff physicians. Please look out for updates through our website.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

UNITED STATES PROGRAMS

There are approximately 150 medical schools in the USA. That is nearly 10x more than Canada! To maximize your chances of matching to a residency program, one should consider applying to US programs if possible.

- **If I do residency in the USA, can I come back and practice in Canada?**
  Provincial licensing rules can vary year to year, and each province has its own licensing rules. In most cases, one can obtain licensure in Canada after completing a US residency, however, one may have to do extra training to ensure their credentials are equivalent to Canadian standards. Please see this guidance by the CPSO for details:
  https://www.cpso.on.ca/en/physicians/registration/registration-policies/alternative-pathways-to-registration

- **If I do residency in the USA, do I have to write the Canadian exams and the USA exams?**
  Provincial licensing rules vary from province to province. In order to get residency in the USA, one must have at least written USMLE Step 1 and 2. Most US residents eventually write USMLE Step 3 to ensure full practice licensure in that particular US state upon residency completion. To return to Canada, you may have to do Canadian exams although US exams may be considered equivalent to Canadian exams depending on the province you wish to get licensed in. Please refer to the individual provincial licensing websites for updates and specifics.

- **How much does it cost to apply to US programs?**
  Costs vary depending on the number of programs you apply for. It can be anywhere from $100 to several thousand dollars, depending on how many applications you put forth. The application process, like CaRMS, is electronic (NRMP/ERAS). There are also associated travel and hotel costs for attending interviews.

- **Immigration in the USA?**
  If you are not a green card holder nor a US citizen, you can only apply to US residency programs that willing to sponsor work visa's (i.e. J1 or H1 visa, etc.). The residency program websites will usually post this information.

WHAT IF I DON'T MATCH?

Your match doesn't define you or your competence. It's a very competitive process, your turn will come! It often takes multiple attempts in multiple years to obtain a residency position.

While waiting to apply in the next cycle, if at all possible, try to obtain employment in any health-care related field. Most hospitals, medical schools, pharmaceutical companies, biotech companies have employment websites. Moreover, make use of your networking skills and personal contacts. Finally, job counsellors (including personnel at HealthForceOntario) can also offer helpful tips.

ADDITIONAL PATHWAYS FOR IMGS

PROVINCE	ADDITIONAL PATHWAY	WEBSITE
British Columbia	Practice Ready Assessment British Columbia (PRA-BC) and College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC (CPSBC)	https://www.prabc.ca
Alberta	Clinical Assessment Program	https://www.aimg.ca/how-it-works/clinical-assessment-placement/
Saskatchewan	Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) eligibility	https://www.saskdocs.ca/work/familyphysicians/imgfamilyphysician/sippa/
Manitoba	MLP- IMG	https://umanitoba.ca/explore/programs-of-study/international-medical-graduate-img-programs
	PRA MB-FP	
	PRA MB-SP	
Ontario	Independent practice certificate in Ontario	https://touchstoneinstitute.ca/assessment/practice-ready-ontario#applicants
Quebec	ECE/PRA	https://www.cmq.org/fr/acceder-a-la-profession/international/permis-restrictif/permis-restrictif-clinicien-evaluation-de-la-capacite-a-exercer-ece-pra
Nova Scotia	NSPRAP	https://www.nsprap.com/overview
New Brunswick	PRA-NB	https://cpsnb.org/en/pra-nb-home
Newfoundland	PRA- NFL	https://www.med.mun.ca/oped/pato/
For a summary of all the programs above, please refer to the supplementary Alternative Pathways Document		

FINAL TIPS

- **Do all the required exams before application season begins**. Aim to score high with the fewest number of attempts. Do not pay attention to "cut-–off scores" that people speak about.
- **Network, network, network** - Build connections with Canadian medical students, residents, and staff physicians. Attend conferences in Canada, collaborate on projects with Canadian healthcare professionals.
- **Deadlines** – Be aware of application deadlines and exam/score reporting deadlines, to ensure your application is complete upon submission.
- **Avoid negative advice, especially from online forums.** People are more likely to express complaints rather than helpful advice, resulting in a strong bias towards discouragement. Block out the negative, focus on your own goals, and put forth your best effort.
- **Have your applications and personal statements edited by trusted mentors and personal contacts**, ideally some of whom work in the Canadian healthcare system if possible
- **Consider applying to as many programs as you can, including the USA**. Casting a wider net ensures more interviews and more chances to match.
- **If you do not match, do not spend the time doing nothing**. Work on improving your application for the next year and continuing to get as much Canadian experience as you can, anywhere that you can.
- Make use of counsellors and helpful organizations like HealthForceOntario.
- **Have a plan B**. Statistically, many people never match nor are able to practice medicine in Canada. While staying hopeful and focused, one should always consider a plan B option, should you not successfully match into residency

And lastly...although easier said than done, do your best to keep spirits up and have faith that things will work out in the best way possible for you and your family.

Good luck, we wish you the best in your journey as an IMG and your future career!