



EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

FAIMER®

Foundation for Advancement of International
Medical Education and Research

ECFMG | FAIMER UPDATE

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The Organization of Program Director Associations
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Today's Discussion

- ECFMG | FAIMER Integrated Missions
- Pathways for Certification
- Volume Snapshot
- Advocacy
- Non-standard Institutional Recognition



Educational Commission
for Foreign Medical Graduates
Est. 1956



Foundation for Advancement
of International Medical
Education and Research
Est. 2000

*Non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to protecting
the public and improving medical education worldwide*

Integrated Missions

ECFMG Mission

Serve the public by:

- Assuring the qualifications of health care professionals
- Providing primary-source verification of credentials of health care professionals, as they serve throughout the world
- Supporting international medical graduates who seek graduate medical education in the United States

FAIMER Mission

Through partnership and collaboration:

- Conduct data analyses and research to inform policies and program development in support of ECFMG missions
- Support the education of physicians and other health care professionals worldwide
- Develop resources on health care workforce used by global communities

Integrated Strategy

- Maximizes our efficiency and resources
- Unifies our expertise to advance quality health care education worldwide
- Ultimately, improves health care for all



Pathways for ECFMG Certification

Integrated Activity: Pathways for Certification

- For 2022, expansion on the pathways offered for the 2021 Match
- Pathways 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 continue with modifications
- Addition of a sixth pathway
- Changes to general eligibility requirements for all pathways
- Satisfactory score on Occupational English Test (OET) Medicine remains a requirement

As a result of the addition of Pathway 6 and changes to certain eligibility requirements, we expect more IMGs to be eligible to pursue a pathway for the 2022 Match.

Pathways 2022

Pathways for ECFMG Certification and NRMP Match

Pathway 1: Already Licensed to Practice Medicine

Pathway 2: Passed Standardized CS Exam for Medical Licensure

Pathway 3: School Accredited by Agency Recognized by WFME

Pathway 4: School Participates in U.S. Federal Student Loan Program

Pathway 5: School Issues a Joint Degree with an LCME School

Pathway 6: Evaluation of Clinical Patient Encounters by Licensed Physicians

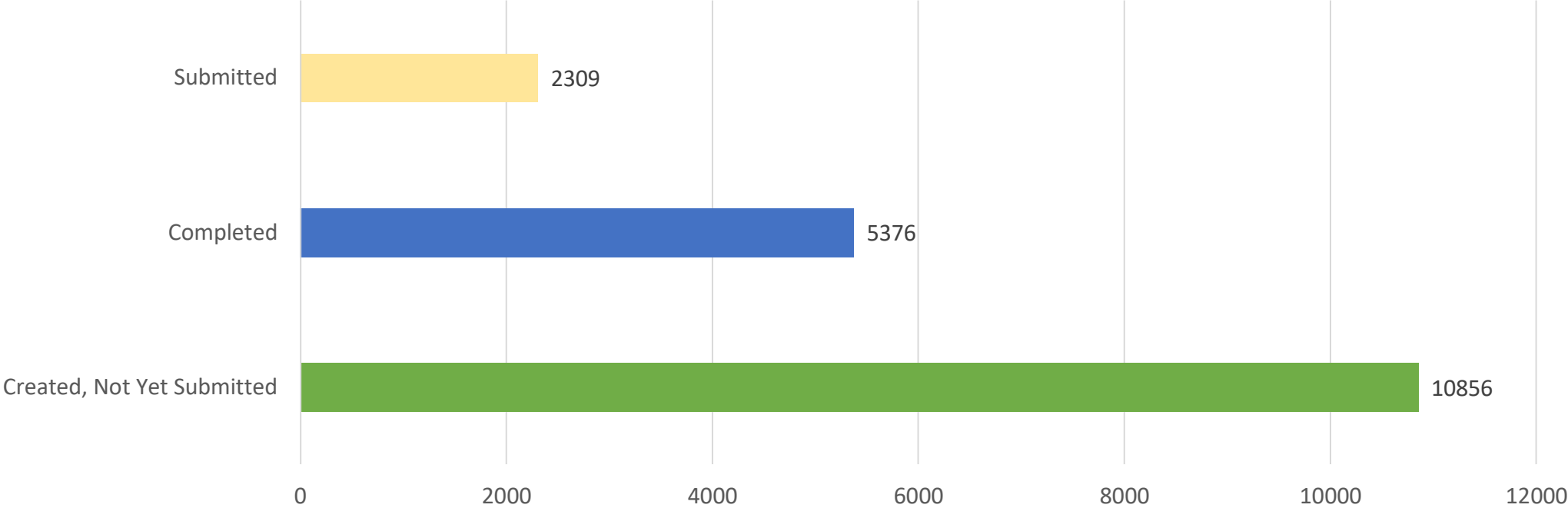
- Intended for applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements for Pathways 1-5 and/or have failed Step 2 CS
- Applicant's clinical skills must be evaluated by licensed physicians using ECFMG's Mini-Clinical Evaluation Exercise (Mini-CEX)

GOALS

- Ensure integrity and continuity of ECFMG Certification
- Provide U.S. Program Directors with an ample, diverse, and highly qualified pool of IMG applicants
- Ensure educational pathway for qualified IMGs to train in the United States without unreasonable disruption

Pathways 2022

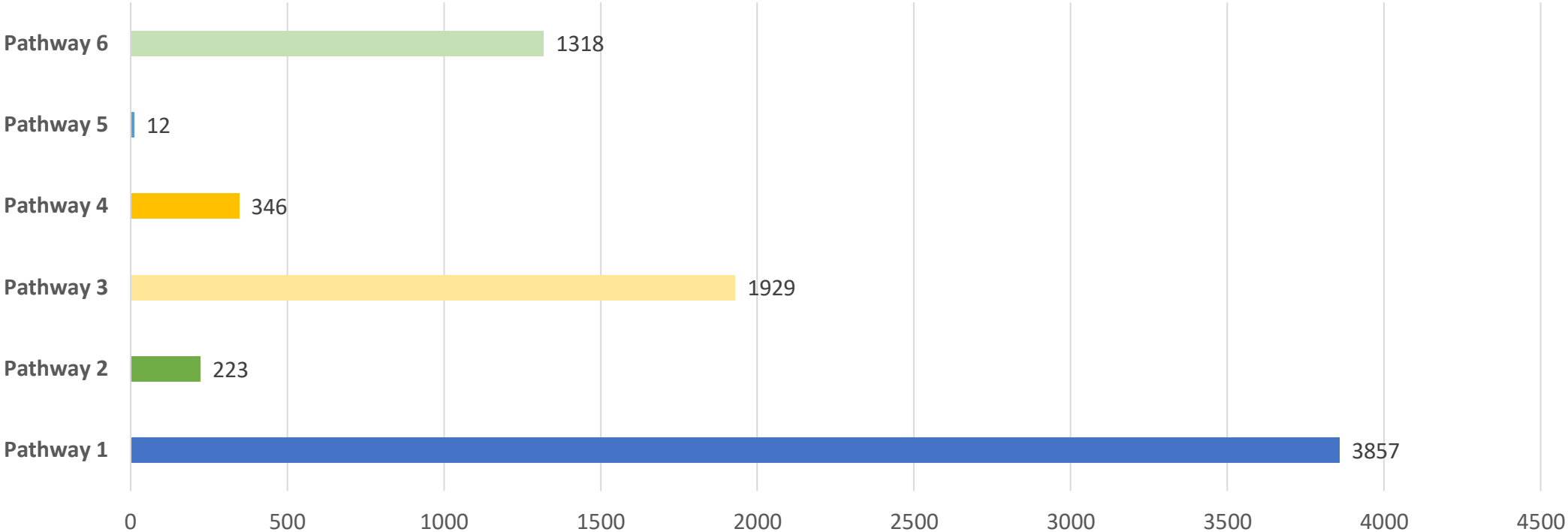
Applications Created after 04/24/2021



Data as of 09/30/2021

Pathways 2022

Applications Created after 04/24/2021

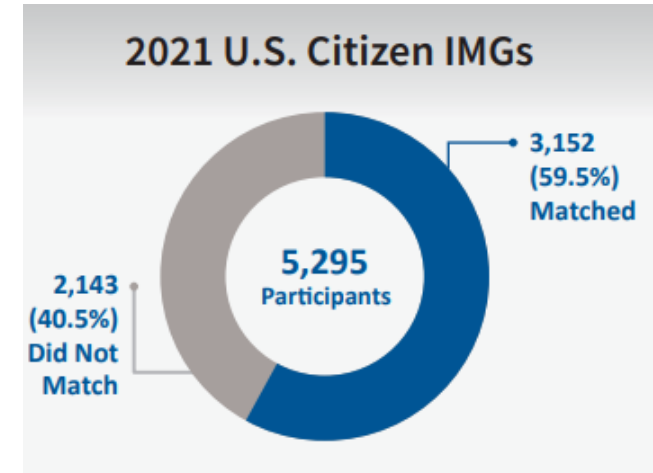


Data as of 09/30/2021

2021 Match Results

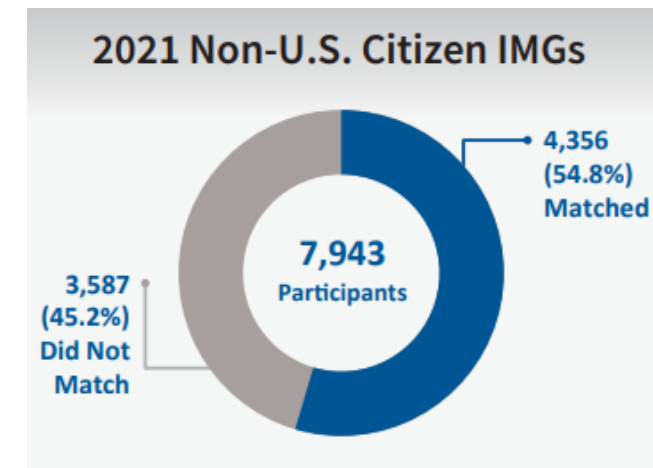
5,295 U.S. citizen IMGs participated, a 2.5% increase over 2020 and highest in 6 years

- 3,152 matched to first-year positions (59.5%)



7,943 non-U.S. citizen IMGs participated, a 5% increase over 2020

- 4,356 matched to first-year positions (54.8%), a 3.2% increase and highest number ever






Approximately 1/3 of IMGs in the 2021 Match Completed a Pathway

ECFMG Services Volume Snapshot

Volume Snapshot

Through September 30, 2021

Volume Variances through Q3 2021

- **Application for Certification:**  2021 Volume Up 43.9% from 2020
- **EVSP Application Volume:**  2021 Volume Up 3.4% from 2020
- **ERAS Tokens Requested:**  2021 Volume Down 2.0% from 2020

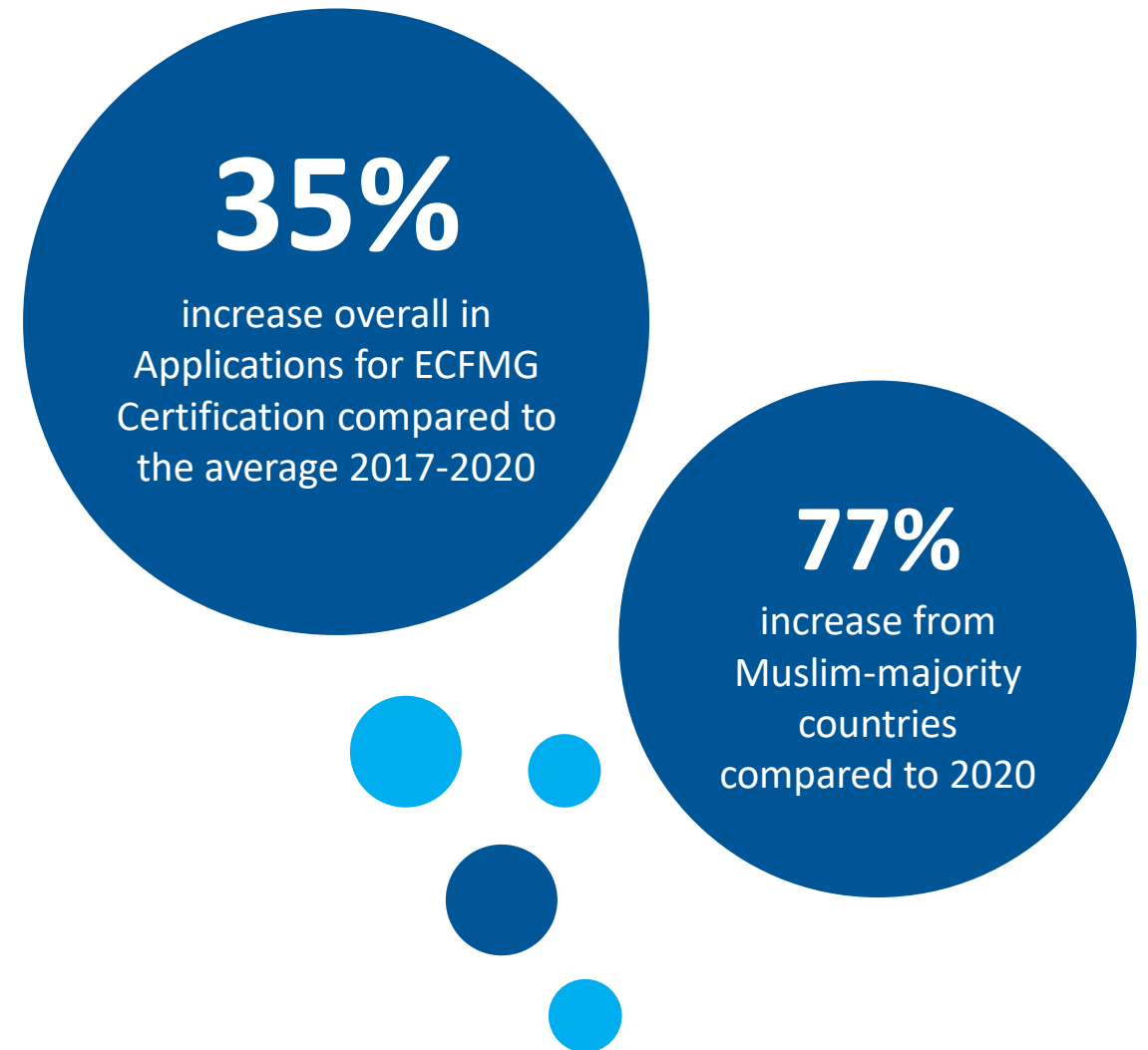
% CHANGE IN 2021 TO DATE COMPARED TO AVERAGE OF 2017 TO 2020 FOR THESE SERVICES:

- Application for Certification up 42.7%
- EVSP Application up 10.2%
- ERAS token volume relatively even (*less than 1% change*)

Application for ECFMG Certification Volume Up

Likely Factors

- **New U.S. Presidential Administration**
 - Many of the Trump Administration's travel restrictions have been lifted and other immigration initiatives suspended
- **Discontinuation of USMLE Step 2 CS**
 - Travel to U.S. no longer required to meet Certification requirements



Advocacy Efforts

2020-2021 Incoming Foreign National IMGs

Challenges	ECFMG FAIMER Mitigation Steps	Result (2020)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embassy / consulate closures • No visa appointments • Ministry of Health closures • Widespread international travel restrictions • Fluctuating immigration policies • Potential delayed arrival and impacts on other learners / health care teams • Concerns about vaccines, quarantine, and travel restrictions • Social Security Administration office closures • International medical students, like U.S. medical students, have not had traditional clinical experiences • U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) proposal to eliminate “duration of status” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy with various branches of U.S. government: Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Social Security Administration • Collaboration with partners • Outreach to GME programs and J-1 physicians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training institution surveys to identify trending issues • Targeted e-mails and live webinars for DIOs and PDs • Current and incoming J-1 physicians on travel restrictions, entry guidance, and well-being resources • Media campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,887 J-1 applications completed and visa documents issued • 2,819 (98%) foreign national physicians reported their arrival • Rate consistent with non-COVID-19 years • Many delays the result of in-country visa processing

ECFMG | FAIMER Well-being Survey

- Administered annually since 2018, extending beyond regulatory obligation to continuous well-being monitoring
- Identifies unique factors associated with well-being of foreign national physicians participating in U.S. graduate medical education
- Goal of developing resources to help foreign national physicians in residency/fellowship programs succeed in the U.S. health care system



Training Programs Well-being Survey

- Strategic complement to the annual well-being survey
- Identifies which well-being resources are commonly available and which are areas of greatest need at U.S. training programs
- ECFMG | FAIMER in unique position to administer as an organization unaffiliated, but connected to, hundreds of training programs



Key Takeaways from Collective Survey Results

- Transitional support remains a priority need
- COVID-19 impacts are varied
- Well-being resources at training programs may be under utilized due to a lack of physician awareness

Transitional Support Quotes

Administrative



“The **paperwork and time** needed to apply for such things as **apartment leases, a social security number, bank accounts and credit cards, drivers license, license plate** were the most difficult aspects of my transition to the US.”

Financial



“Starting **without a credit score** and building it... in the beginning whether it was **phone company, credit card, internet or electricity providers, they all took extra deposits** and in some cases ‘non refundable’ in order to provide service.”

Cultural



“It was **hard to go grocery shopping** and know what to buy/trust, to go out for a meal and figure out the **tipping system**, to adjust to using credit card/debit **card instead of money**. It was hard to adjust to the **weather!**”

Health System



“Transitioning from **paper based work to electronic platforms.**”
“**EMRs. How to communicate effectively with medical staff.**”
“Learning health systems, **insurance companies**, etc. Learning **abbreviations** in medical records.”

Outcomes of Research to Date

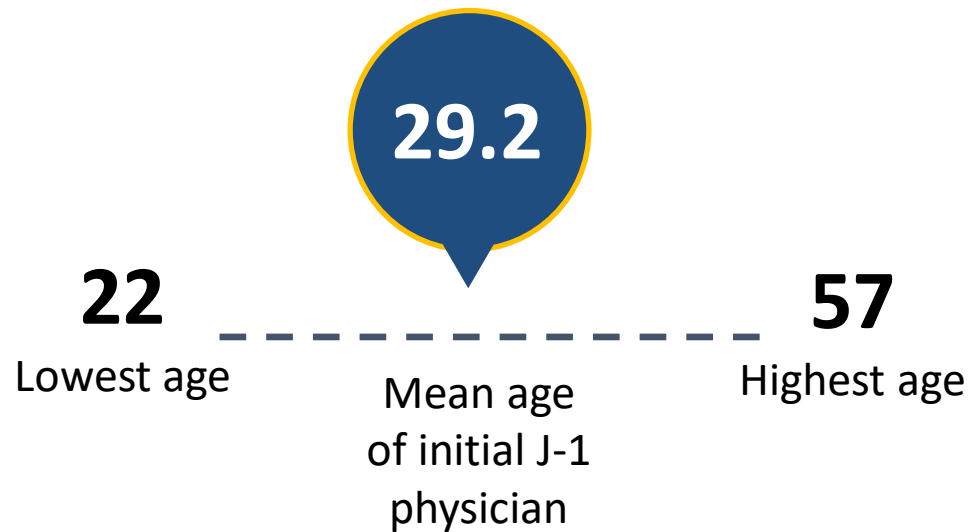
- Presentation of our survey findings at both the 2020 and 2021 ACGME Annual Education Conferences and IAMRA 2021
- Publication of a manuscript titled "IMG Resident Wellness: Examining Qualitative Data from J-1 Visa Physician Recipients" in *Academic Medicine*
- Resources developed
 - Creation of on-line well-being module for foreign national physicians
 - Establishment of a well-being resources page on the ECFMG | FAIMER website
 - J-1 physician-authored blog entries featuring supportive and relatable stories published on *Journeys in Medicine*, an ECFMG blog

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

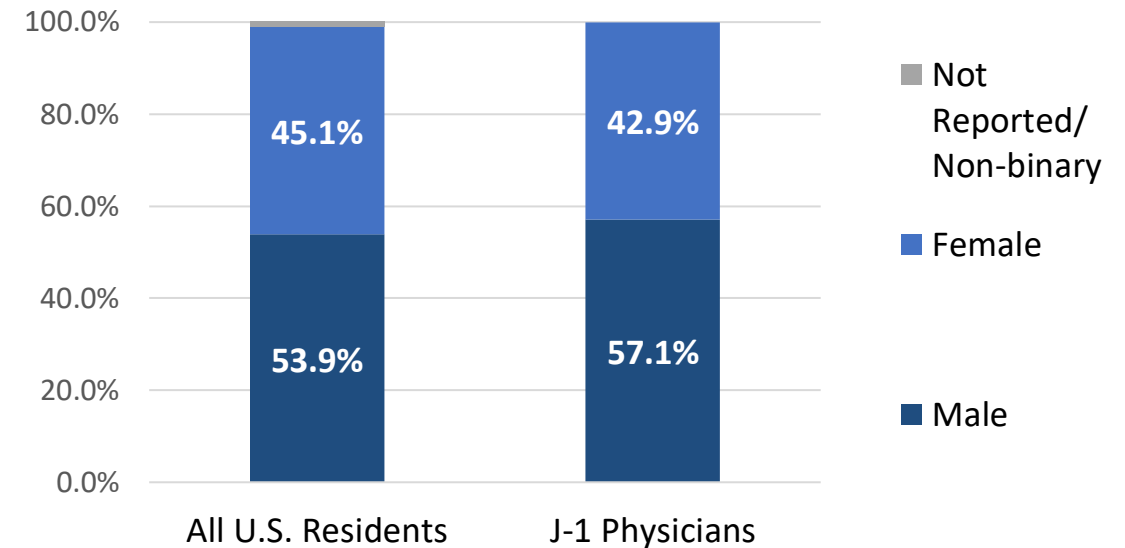
- ECFMG | FAIMER committed to raising awareness as to the contributions of foreign national physicians to U.S. health care
- 12,506 J-1 physicians engaged in U.S. GME in 2020; these diverse individuals represent a wide range of identities and intersections, such as:
 - Nation of origin
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Native Language
 - Race
 - Ethnicity
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Sexual orientation
 - Native language
 - Other

Age and Gender of J-1 Physicians, 2020

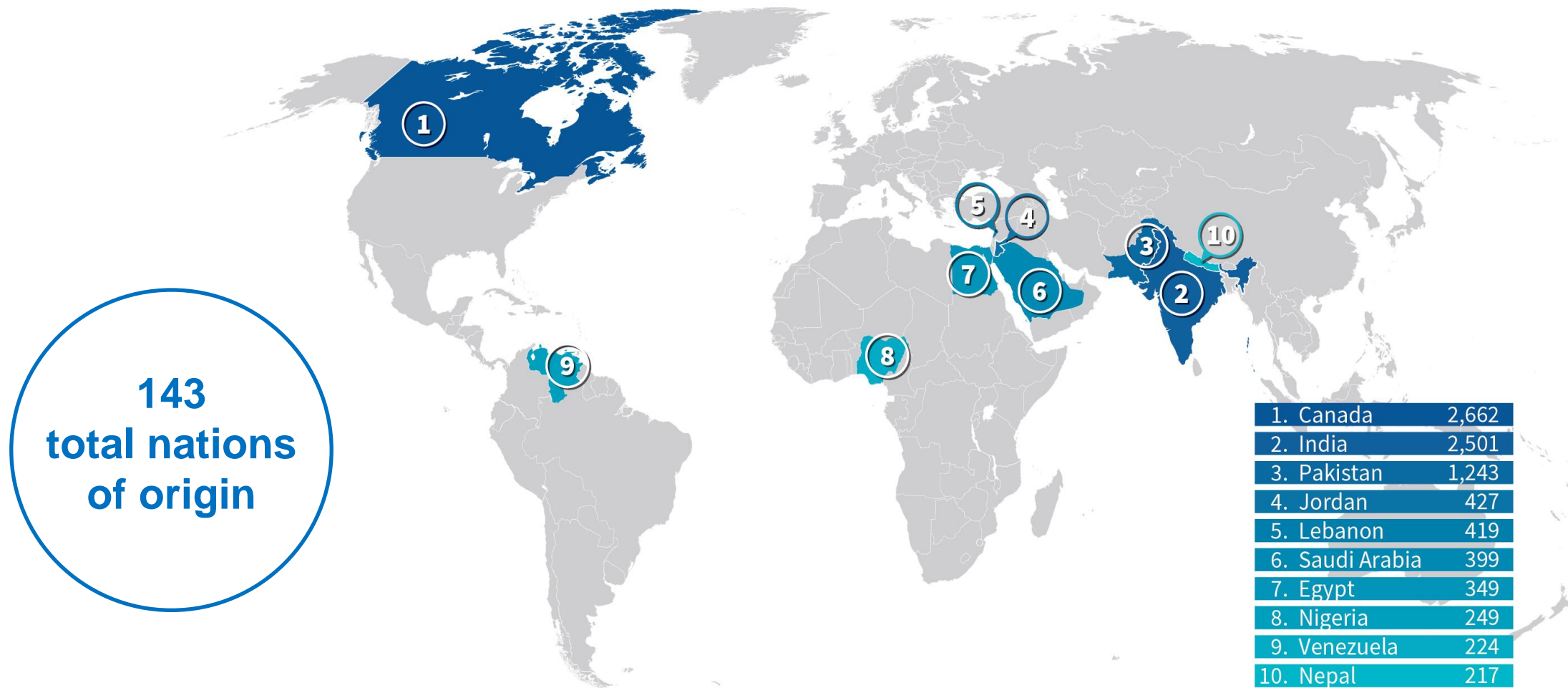
J-1 physicians represent a wide range of ages. Data shows ages of initial J-1 physicians, 2020.



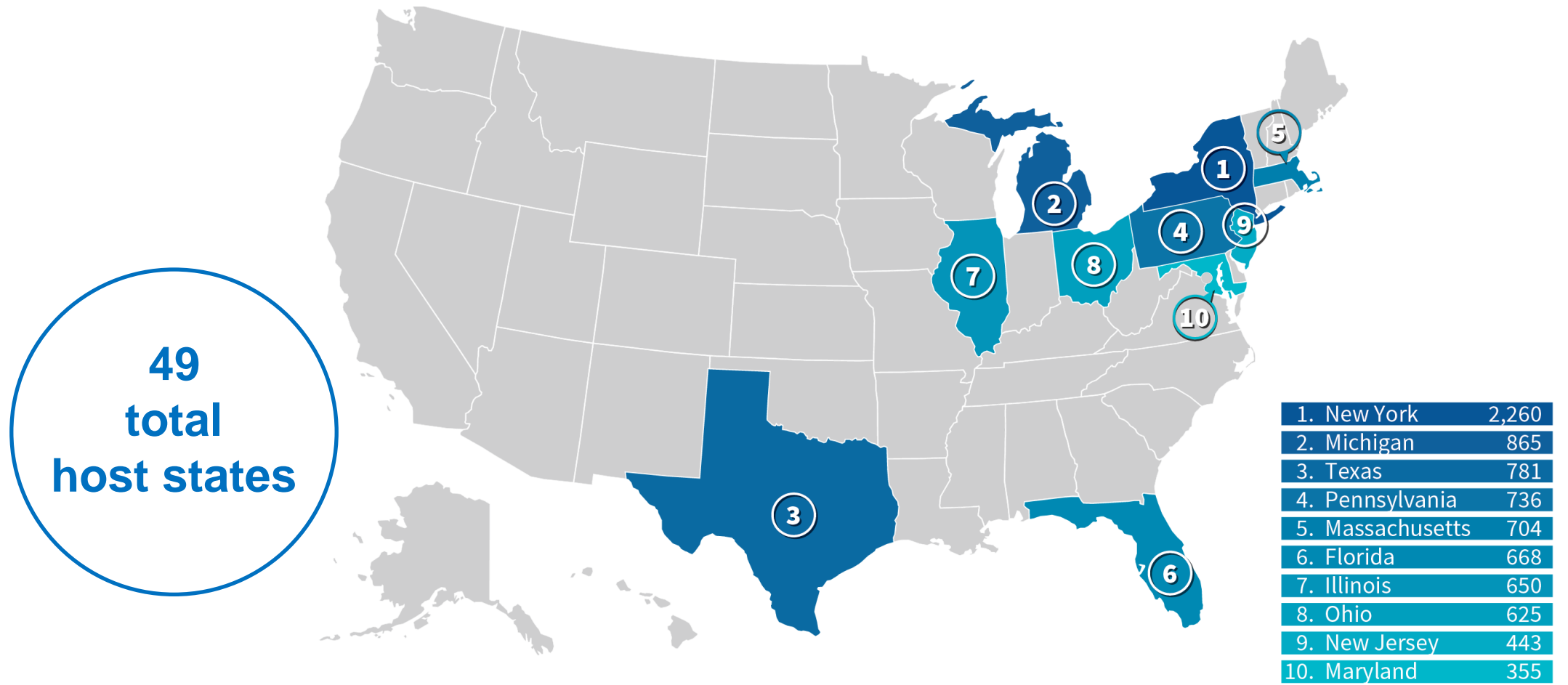
J-1 physician population has slightly higher proportion of males than total U.S. resident population.



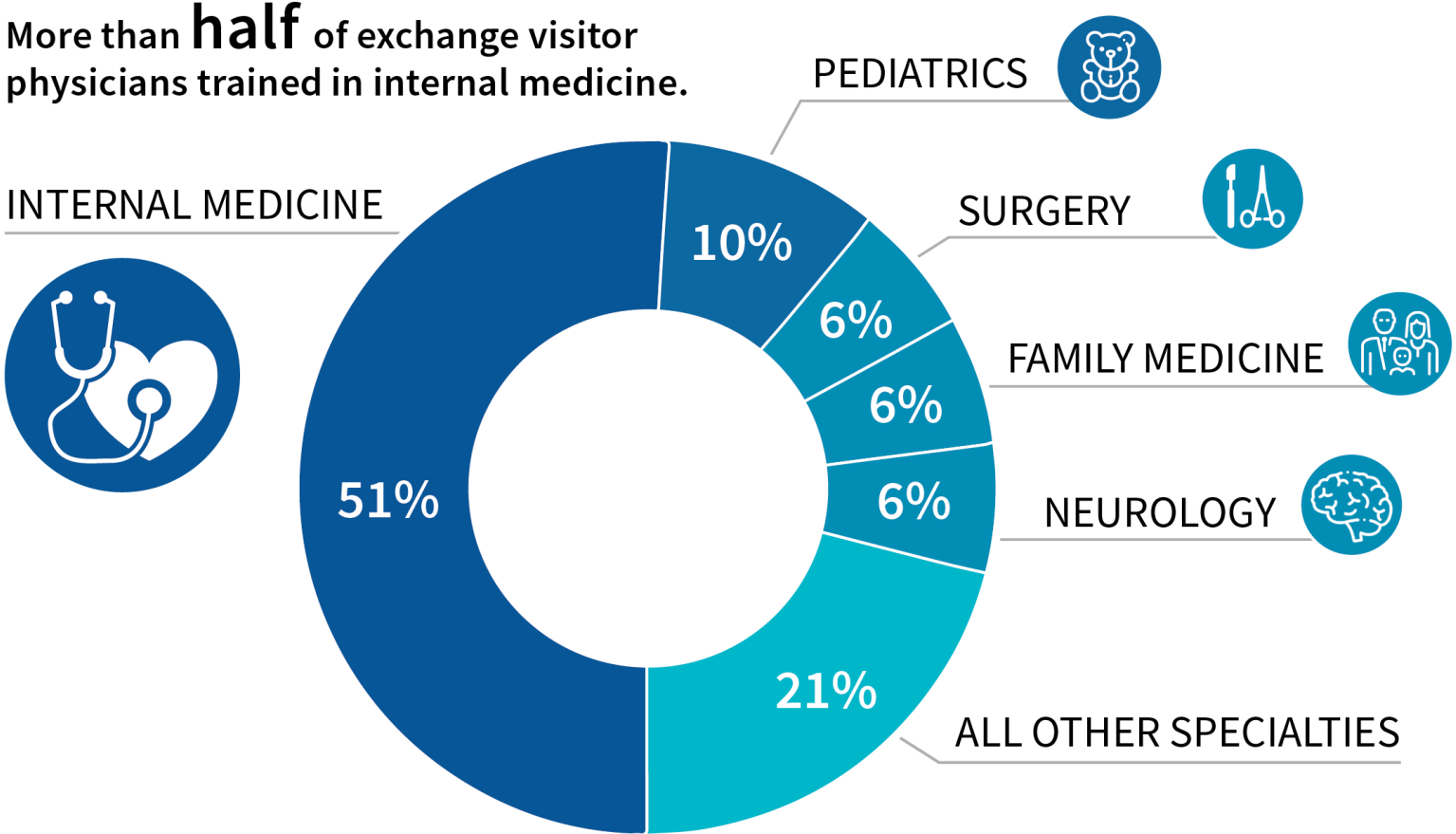
J-1 Physician Top Ten Nations of Origin, 2020



J-1 Physician Top Ten Host States, 2020



Specialties Pursued by J-1 Physicians, 2020



**Specialties listed include related subspecialties.*

Non-standard Training

Non-standard Training

Advanced clinical subspecialty disciplines or pathways for which there is no ACGME accreditation and/or ABMS Member Board certification available

Historically

- All non-standard disciplines had to be endorsed by an appropriate ABMS Member Board to be considered for J-1 sponsorship
- Role of the ABMS Member Boards in providing this approval was detailed in federal regulation
 - *...“Duration shall be determined by the Secretary of State of the Department of State at the time of the alien physician's entry into the United States. Such determination shall be based on criteria established in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and which take into consideration the requirements of the various medical specialty boards as evidenced in the Director of Medical Specialties published by Marquis Who's Who for the **American Board of Medical Specialties.**”*

Rationale for Transfer

- ABMS first approached ECFMG and ACGME in 2015
- Recognition of non-standard training does not fit with the mission of ABMS or that of its Member Boards
 - ABMS Member Boards are responsible for certification of individuals
 - Not structured to provide oversight of training programs and institutions
- Fits with ACGME mission and structure, as primary national accreditor of graduate medical education

ECFMG, ABMS, and ACGME announced a regulatory change related to non-standard recognition in April 2021.

Non-standard Recognition Transfer to ACGME

Future State

- ACGME to offer recognition of Sponsoring Institutions that offer non-standard training programs **to J-1 physicians**
- Designed to ensure institutions are providing appropriate oversight of non-standard program(s)
- Working group formed to develop requirements
- Recognition Committee to be formed to review and monitor institutions seeking to achieve and maintain recognition

**ACGME's public comment period on proposed
Recognition Requirements closed on August 25, 2021**

Questions & Discussion



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