



**Intealth**<sup>TM</sup>

Advancing the Global Health Workforce

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**ECFMG FAIMER**

# International Medical Graduates and English Proficiency

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# About Intealth

- Unites ECFMG and FAIMER under a common *Vision*
- *Missions* aligned to create powerful synergies
- ECFMG and FAIMER operate and offer their respective portfolios of services as divisions of Intealth

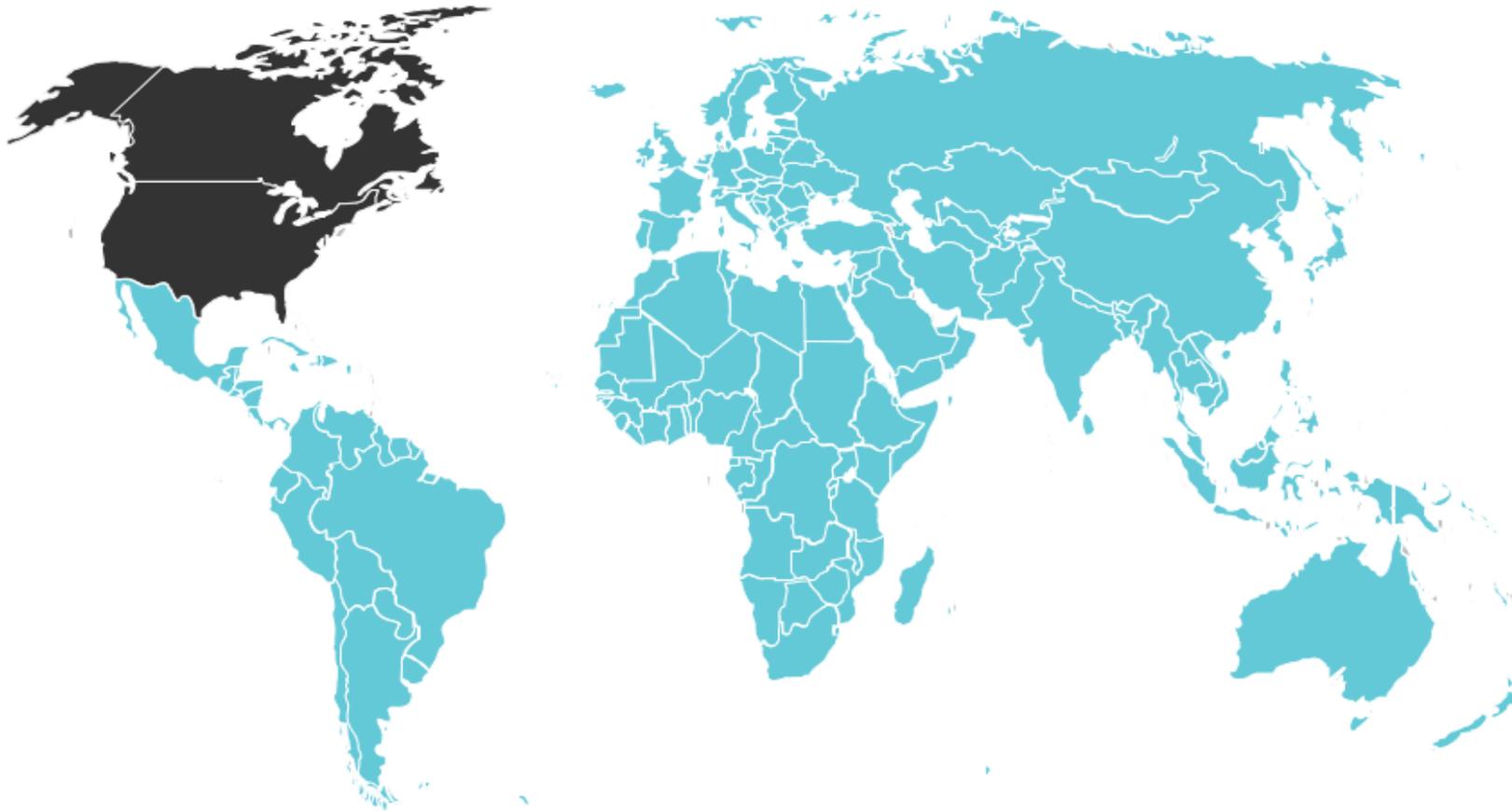


**VISION: The trusted global authority on health care education**

ECFMG		FAIMER
<b>MISSION</b> To serve the public by:		<b>MISSION</b> Through partnership and collaboration:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assuring the qualifications of health care professionals</li><li>• Providing primary-source verification of credentials of health care professionals, as they serve throughout the world</li><li>• Supporting international medical graduates who seek graduate medical education in the United States</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct data analyses and research to inform policies and program development in support of ECFMG missions</li><li>• Support the education of physicians and other health care professionals worldwide</li><li>• Develop resources on the health care workforce used by global communities</li></ul>	
<b>VALUES</b>		
<b>Integrity and Trust</b> We uphold the highest ethical standards and align our words with our actions.	<b>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b> We embrace ethnic and cultural diversity, invite varied perspectives, and provide fair access and opportunity for all individuals.	<b>Commitment</b> We are passionate about our work and dedicated to meeting internal and external expectations.
<b>Respect</b> We value the contributions of others and treat one another with dignity.	<b>Mindful Leadership</b> We recognize that we each have a role in fostering a culture of collaboration, creativity, and compassion in the service of others.	<b>Accountability</b> We take personal responsibility for our own behaviors, performance, and decisions.

# Who is an International Medical Graduate (IMG)?

An IMG is a physician who received their basic medical degree from a medical school located outside of the United States and Canada.\*



IMGs comprise  
approximately  
**25%**  
of the U.S. physician  
workforce

*\*Individuals who graduate from  
Canadian medical schools after June 30,  
2025 will be IMGs.*

# IMG Profiles

## Foreign Citizen IMGs



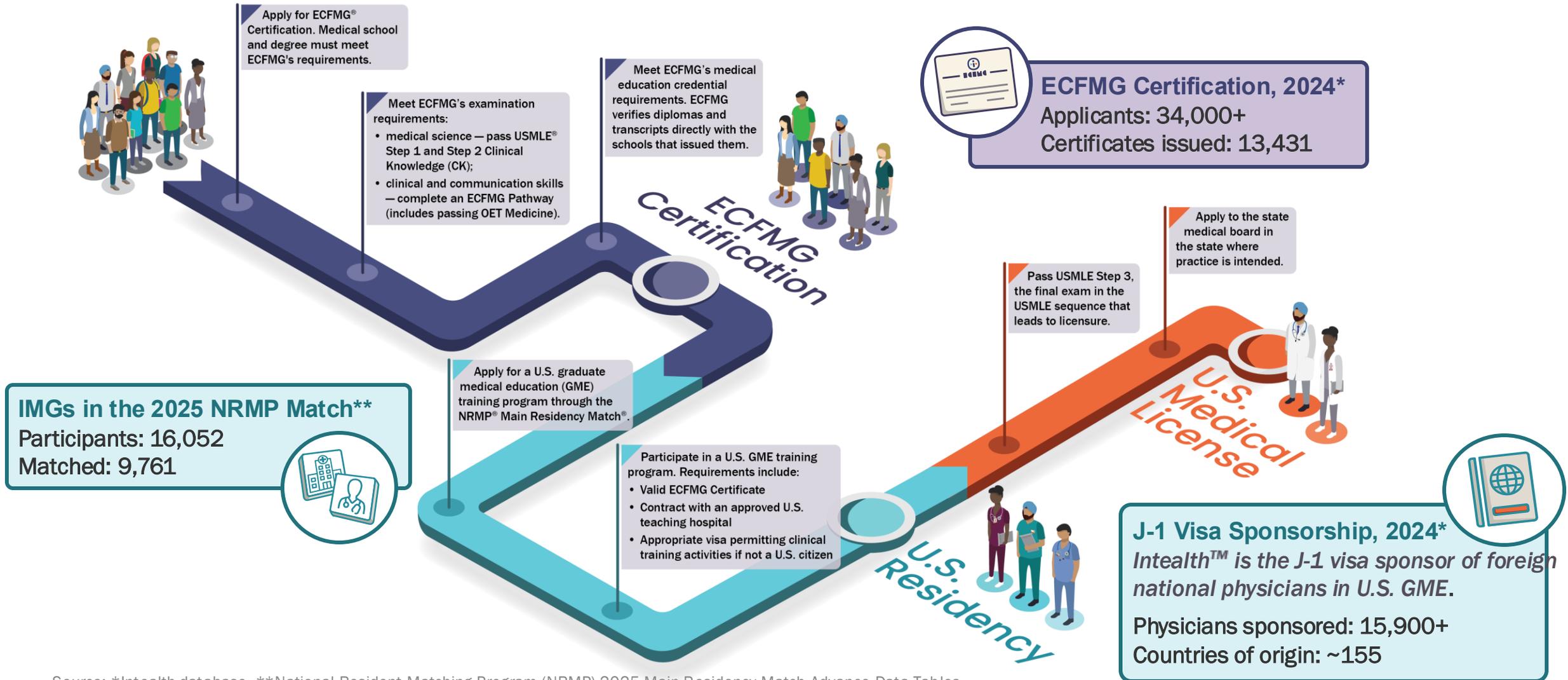
- Majority apply to ECFMG as graduates
- Require a visa for GME
  - J1 or H1B (usually); other visa types possible
- Transition to GME often different, longer
- ~70% of IMGs

## U.S. Citizen IMGs



- Majority apply to ECFMG as students
- Do not need visa
- Same/similar path as U.S. medical school graduates
- Many attend medical schools in Caribbean or Eastern Europe
- ~30% of IMGs

# Typical IMG Journey to U.S. Medical Licensure



Source: \*Intealth database. \*\*National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) 2025 Main Residency Match Advance Data Tables.

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# ECFMG Certification is the Gateway to the United States for IMGs

- 65+ Years Certifying IMGs: More than 420,000 physicians have been ECFMG Certified since 1956
- ECFMG Certification is required for:
  - Participation in U.S. graduate medical education (GME)
  - Step 3 of United States Licensing Exam<sup>®</sup> (USMLE<sup>®</sup>)
  - Medical licensure



# Meet Eligibility Requirements

## Medical School Requirements

- Attended a medical school that is eligible for ECFMG Certification
- Acceptable Graduation Year and Degree Title
- At least 4 years of medical education

## Individual Requirements

- Identity Verification
- Transfer credits meet requirements
  - Transferred from an eligible medical school
  - Cannot transfer failing courses
  - Cannot transfer from more than one medical school

# Certification Requirements

## Medical Science Exams

- USMLE Step 1
- USMLE Step 2 CK

## Clinical Skills and Communication Skills

- *Pathways (including OET in Medicine)*

# Why Establishing English Competency is Important: **Visas and Immigration**

- Visa sponsorship requires **proven English proficiency** (e.g., J-1 sponsorship).
- Programs want assurance that residents can **function independently and safely** in a U.S. clinical environment.

# Why Establishing English Competency is Important: **Team Collaboration**

- U.S. healthcare is highly **team-based**. Physicians must coordinate with nurses, specialists, pharmacists, and others.
- Effective teamwork hinges on **fluent, confident communication** during rounds, handoffs, and emergencies.
- Miscommunication can **delay care** or cause friction in high-pressure environments.

# Why Establishing English Competency is Important: **Patient Care and Safety**

- **Clear communication** is essential for accurate diagnoses, treatment plans, and patient education.
- Misunderstandings due to language barriers can lead to **medical errors**, which can harm patients and expose physicians and institutions to liability.
- Empathy and rapport—core to good bedside manner—require **nuanced language skills**.

# Why Establishing English Competency is Important: **Acculturation and Well-being**

- Language barriers can create **isolation**, especially if physicians feel misunderstood or unable to express themselves fully.
- Difficulty communicating may lead to **lower confidence, burnout, and imposter syndrome**, especially when trying to adapt to a new medical system and culture.
- Communication skills promote **social integration**, helping IMGs form support systems with peers, mentors, and friends.

# Why Establishing English Competency is Important: **Educational Success**

- Training programs involve **intensive learning**—didactics, presentations, journal clubs, and exams (like USMLE Step 3).
- English fluency helps IMGs **grasp medical jargon**, engage in academic discussions, and **demonstrate competence** during evaluations.