

## COVID-19: National Physician Town hall questions on IMGs

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On April 9, 2020, a panel of AMA leaders took to YouTube for a live town hall to shed light on the most pressing issues facing physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You'll find answers on this page to questions, compiled from queries submitted during the AMA's National Physician Town Hall, about immigration, visas and more.

### **What is the AMA doing to secure the immigration status of frontline IMG physicians risking illness and deportation?**

The AMA is actively fighting to protect the immigration status of IMG physicians. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the AMA has:

- Successfully urged the State Department to reverse the suspension of visa processing for foreign-born medical professionals
- Successfully encouraged the State Department to allow the extension of programs for J-1 physicians
- Encouraged U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to temporarily expedite extensions and changes of status for foreign national doctors currently in the U.S.
- Joined with medical education and other health care organizations to fight an Immigration and Customs Enforcement proposal that would upset the "duration of status" for foreign trained medical professionals

### **What can the AMA do to find positions for IMGs and mobilize this pool of highly qualified physicians during the current health care crisis?**

Physicians who hold a H-1B visa or are part of the Conrad State 30 program are critical to providing care in rural and other underserved areas of the US. That's why the AMA is proactively advocating to expand the number of physicians serving in these areas, working to draft legislation with U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, U.S. Representative Bradley Schneider

, and other bipartisan, bicameral Congressional members.

## **What kind of disruptions can IMGs expect to see in their training? Are there options available to complete training and licensure requirements remotely?**

Physician training has certainly been upended by the COVID-19 pandemic, but individual medical education institutions and training programs are developing ways to help offset these disruptions. Some are turning to distance education for certain required aspects of physician training. Students and trainees should discuss remote options available with their program sponsors or educational institution.

All examinees with scheduling permits for USMLE testing in 2020 have been granted an extended eligibility period ending December 2020. You can find more information on the USMLE COVID-19 page.

For more information on how the pandemic is impacting IMG physicians, visit the AMA's COVID-19 FAQs: Guidance for international medical graduates.