

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 1
(June 2021)

Introduced by: International Medical Graduates Section

Subject: ECFMG 2024 Accreditation Requirement for World Federation
for Medical Education (WFME) Recognition

Referred to: Reference Committee C

Whereas, The exponential growth of the private sector medical schools, their varying quality of medical education, clinical rotations, and accreditation requirements have become a severe concern to ECFMG; and

Whereas, A standard global accreditation process would help ensure patient safety, good quality clinical outcomes, and professional accountability; and

Whereas, There has always been a need for a transparent and rigorous method of accreditation of medical schools, worldwide, to meet an internationally accepted standard; and

Whereas, After the international task force meeting in 2005, The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) jointly published Guidelines for Accreditation of Basic Medical Education¹, which formed the basis of the 2013 WHO policy briefing on medical accreditation and the 2016 International Association Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA) statement on accreditation of medical education programs²; and

Whereas, In 2010, ECFMG stated that effective in 2023, applicants for ECFMG Certification would be required to be a student or graduate of a medical school accredited by a WFME-recognized accrediting agency³; and

Whereas, During the last ten years, of the 130 - 147 countries whose medical students apply for ECFMG certification, there are 23 agencies that cover 46 countries for accreditation recognition from the WFME only 23 countries have obtained WFME recognition status, and only 13 there are 16 additional agencies in the cue for consideration more have applied⁴; and

Whereas, Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current deadline for implementing the WFME based accreditation standards has been extended to 2024⁵. Given the time constraints, it is unlikely that most countries will have their accrediting bodies obtain the WFME recognition status by 2024; and

Whereas, One in four physicians in the U.S. is a graduate of an international medical school who fills 54.6% of primary care specialty positions^{6,7} and fills in the physician workforce gaps that would remain vacant; and

Whereas, IMG physicians have provided ongoing primary health care services to the American people of equivalent quality to those who have completed medical school in the U.S.; and

Whereas, There is a predicted shortage of 21,400 to 55,200 primary care physicians and a total physician shortfall of 54,100 to 139,000 by 2033, and the new prerequisites for WFME based

certification requirements will significantly limit the applicant pool for primary healthcare positions, thus negatively impacting the health care of the nation; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Medical Association work with the state and specialty medical associations and other stakeholders to change the ECFMG 2024 credentialing requirements ~~apprise them of the ECFMG requirements and the foreseeable shortage of IMG physicians in underserved populations and primary health care settings to be prepared with alternative options to assist IMG physicians in providing assistance with the foreseeable shortage of IMG physicians in underserved populations and in primary health care settings.~~ (Directive to Take Action); and be it further

RESOLVED, That the AMA work with ~~the Federation of State Medical Boards and~~ ECFMG to develop more robust communication channels with participating medical schools and explore reasons for the low rate of accreditation and possible ways to address those barriers in meeting accreditation requirements. (Directive to Take Action)

References

1. WHO/WFME Guidelines for Accreditation of Basic Medical Education <https://bit.ly/3j03bVB>, Accessed on September 19, 2020.
2. Policy Brief on Accreditation of Institutions for Health Professional Education World Health organization 2013; <https://bit.ly/32Unf6n>, Accessed on September 19, 2020.
3. 2023 Medical School Accreditation Requirement <https://www.ecfmg.org/accreditation/>, Accessed on September 12, 2020.
4. WFME Agencies with Recognition Status and applying <https://bit.ly/330jE6K>, Accessed on September 12, 2020.
5. ECFMG Medical School Accreditation Requirement Moved to 2024, <https://bit.ly/3429jqg>, Accessed on September 11, 2020.
6. Inside the numbers behind the record-setting 2019 Match; <https://bit.ly/364GyM4>, Accessed on September 20, 2020.
7. Press Release: Thousands of Resident Applicants Celebrate NRMP Match Results <https://bit.ly/3i7XqEp>, Accessed on September 15, 2020.
8. The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections From 2018 to 2033, <https://bit.ly/2FW7RO9>, Accessed on September 23, 2020.