Our Commitment to Physician Well-Being and Resilience
December 11, 2017

Each year, ECFMG® sponsors more than 10,000 foreign national physicians in J-1 visa status to participate in U.S. clinical training programs. In addition to the demands of their training programs and the challenges of a changing health care landscape, these residents and fellows must contend with the stresses of living and working in a foreign country, including culture shock and separation from family and friends.

J-1 physicians make essential contributions to health care. They add diversity to the U.S. physician workforce. In many other countries, they build overall health workforce capacity and serve in much-needed specialties.

ECFMG and its Exchange Visitor Sponsorship Program (EVSP) are refining a number of initiatives to meet the unique needs of these physicians and to support them in their U.S. training programs.

1. Expanding a robust program to gauge the health, safety, and welfare of J-1 physicians
   - Establishing regularly scheduled touch points when all J-1 physicians are contacted for health, safety, and welfare checks and invited to contact EVSP with concerns
   - Send reports to training programs that list all J-1 physicians in the program and require the program to confirm each physician’s status
   - Share resources such as the well-being initiatives of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) resource, “Adjusting to a New Culture”
   - Contact J-1 physicians impacted by a significant event, such as a natural disaster or other incident, in their U.S. city/state or home country
   - Increase awareness among J-1 physicians and their training programs that EVSP staff will aid and support them with any questions, concerns, or complaints
   - An internal policy to ensure effective management, tracking, and resolution of complaints

2. Provide support throughout changes in immigration policy, such as the Executive Orders and Presidential Proclamation of 2017
   - Consulting immigration counsel, other organizations, and DOS
   - Communicating directly with J-1 physicians and training programs to share information and guidance
   - Establishing a dedicated web page to centralize information and guidance
   - Developing a Fact Sheet for Consular Officials
   - Coordinating advocacy efforts with the Association of American Medical Colleges

3. Enriching the educational and cultural experiences of J-1 physicians. In keeping with the educational and cultural exchange goals of the U.S. Exchange Visitor (J-1 Visa) Program, ECFMG is developing resources that facilitate an understanding and appreciation of U.S. history and culture. In addition to fulfilling the goals of the J-1 Visa Sponsorship, these resources offer J-1 physicians recreational opportunities and connections to their communities that contribute to their overall well-being.
   - Publishing a Cross-Cultural State Resource
   - Recruiting a Cultural and Educational Affairs Program Manager to develop additional educational and cultural resources
   - Establishing a Twitter platform to communicate current events and cultural offerings to J-1 physicians

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ECFMG® is an organization committed to promoting excellence in medical education.