

NRMP

National Resident Matching Program

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U.S. MEDICAL SCHOOL SENIORS ENJOY MOST SUCCESSFUL “MATCH DAY” IN 30 YEARS *2008 Residency Program Match is the Largest in History*

Washington, D.C., March 20, 2008—Across the nation today, more than 15,000 U.S. medical school seniors will be joined by classmates, friends and family at “Match Day” ceremonies to learn where they will spend their years of residency training following graduation. There is plenty of reason to celebrate. According to the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), which conducts the Match, more than 94 percent of seniors who applied for residencies this year were paired with a program of their choice—the highest percentage in more than three decades.

The 2008 Match was also the largest ever. Overall, 28,737 applicants vied for one of 22,240 first-year residency positions—the most applicants in history. Of those applicants, a record-high 15,242 were U.S. medical school seniors, 94.2 percent of whom successfully matched to a residency program. In fact, 84.6 percent of those seniors matched to one of their top three program choices. The number of first-year residency positions available through the Match was also the highest in history; 395 additional positions were added this year.

“This Match has been a remarkable success,” said NRMP President Henry J. Schultz, M.D. “The record size of the Match this year and the favorable outcome for students are certainly reasons to celebrate this important rite of passage along the path to becoming a doctor.”

There were notable increases this year as well in the number of Match applicants from international medical schools and osteopathic schools (which award the D.O. degree). More than 10,300 graduates of non-U.S. medical schools applied for U.S. residency positions through the Match; roughly 4,650 (about 45 percent) of whom matched to a first-year position. Nearly 1,900 osteopathic students and graduates applied to the Match this year and 71.6 percent matched to a position.

Conducted annually by the NRMP, the Match uses a computer algorithm, designed to produce favorable results for students, that aligns the preferences of applicants with the preferences of residency programs in order to fill the thousands of training positions available at U.S. teaching hospitals.

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More than one-fifth of the positions available through the Match this year were in internal medicine, and 2,660 U.S. medical school seniors (17.4 percent of all participating seniors) matched to one of those positions.

Match results can be an indicator of career interests among graduating medical school students. One notable trend in specialty choice this year was an increased interest in family medicine residency positions; 1,156 (or 7.6 percent) of U.S. medical school seniors matched to one of those positions, up from 7.2 percent last year. There were more family medicine positions offered through the Match this year, reversing what had been a significant decline in available positions since 1998. The 2008 Match results also indicate that plastic surgery, orthopaedic surgery, dermatology, otolaryngology, diagnostic radiology, radiation oncology, and general surgery continue to be popular and competitive specialties.

Although Match Day is celebrated today as results are revealed to applicants, the Match is actually a week-long process. On Monday of this week, NRMP applicants were informed whether they had been matched to a residency program of their choice, although the name of that program was not revealed. Today, those matched applicants learn where they will spend at least their first year of residency training. For U.S. medical school seniors, this news will be delivered and celebrated during Match Day ceremonies at medical schools across the country.

Applicants who learned Monday that they did not match to a residency position participate in what is known as “the scramble,” which began on Tuesday. The locations of remaining unfilled residency positions were released to unmatched applicants, who then had the opportunity to contact the programs directly to express interest in the open positions. Following the Match this year there were 1,300 unfilled first-year residency positions available for participants in the scramble. The NRMP estimates that between 12,000 and 13,000 people attempt to secure one of those open positions. Among these residency-seekers are the 7,800 applicants who did not match to a program (883 of whom are U.S. medical school seniors), as well as approximately 5,000 additional individuals who registered for the Match but did not complete all of the steps required for participation.

The Match was established in 1952, at the request of medical students, to provide a fair and impartial transition from medical school to residency.

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The National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) is a private, not-for-profit organization established in 1952 to provide an orderly and fair mechanism to match the preferences of applicants to U.S. residency positions with the preferences of residency program directors for those applicants. The NRMP is sponsored by the American Board of Medical Specialties, the American Medical Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the American Hospital Association, and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies.