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NRMP STATEMENT ON PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 9645 AND DEFERRED ACTION FOR CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS (DACA)

On December 4, 2017, the United States Supreme Court allowed enforcement of President Trump's September 2017 Proclamation implementing enhanced vetting processes, even while legal challenges are pending. As a result, citizens from eight countries—Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Chad, Venezuela, and North Korea—may be subject to certain visa restrictions. The restrictions vary by country, and it is important to note that the Proclamation outlines exemptions and provisions by which a visa applicant may seek a waiver of an applicable restriction. In addition, physicians from the eight countries who currently are in the U.S. for residency training may seek extensions of their J-1 visas through the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). Information on the Presidential Proclamation, including country-specific restrictions, can be found on [ECFMG's website](#) and the [State Department website](#).

Also working its way through the courts are cases challenging the Administration's decision to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program that provides a legal status for recipients for a renewable two-year work term, including work authorization and other benefits. DACA and work permits remain valid until their expiration date, but no new DACA applications are being accepted and those expiring after March 5, 2018 will not be renewed. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security no longer will grant DACA recipients permission to travel abroad. It remains to be seen whether Congress will extend or amend the program.

The Administration's visa restrictions and changes to the DACA program will have a significant impact on the Match. NRMP expects more than 42,000 applicants to register for the 2018 Main Residency Match. That number includes both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. In addition, almost 5,000 programs participate in the Main Residency Match, offering 32,000 training slots. Ranking for the 2018 Match opens on January 15, and the Rank Order List Deadline is February 21. There also are Fellowship Matches occurring monthly. Training for all programs typically begins on or about July 1.

Applicants affected by the visa restrictions or who are beneficiaries of the DACA program already are applying for and interviewing at residency and fellowship programs, even though it is not certain they will be permitted to enter or remain in the U.S. by the start of training. That uncertainty leaves programs the choice of not ranking qualified applicants or risking empty training slots on their program start date. The affected applicants have worked hard for many years to achieve their goal of becoming physicians, and they should not be denied that opportunity because of policies that do not consider the individual. Similarly, U.S. training programs should be able to select applicants based on their excellent character and qualifications, without regard to nationality. Both applicants and programs benefit from an orderly process for entry into graduate medical education. The Administration's proposed changes disrupt that process very considerably. As for the current Match cycle, NRMP encourages applicants and programs to make the best decisions they can under existing circumstances. For its part, NRMP will be liberal in granting waivers to applicants and programs if they cannot meet their respective Match obligations because of the effects of the visa restrictions or changes to the DACA program.