



## **Policy Corner – November 2024**

### **Communication Between Applicants and Programs**

The NRMP recently convened its Transition to Residency conference in Louisville, and a question posed to NRMP leadership during the Town Hall focused on communication between Match applicants and programs. We thought it would be good to review communication-based policy with the broader community as interview season gains momentum.

A cornerstone of the Match is that participants should be able to move through the process without undue burden and coercion. Section 6.5 of the **Match Participation Agreement for Programs** provides that right for programs but also dictates how programs should protect and provide those rights for applicants:

#### **6.5 Restrictions on Persuasion**

*Programs have a right to make selection decisions that are free of undue or unwarranted pressure and should report to the NRMP any violations of these rights.*

*Only the final preferences of programs and applicants as expressed on their final certified rank order list or by offers extended and accepted through SOAP, will determine the offering of positions and placement of applicants through the Match.*

*Programs are not authorized at any time during the interview, matching, or onboarding processes to:*

- 1. Request that applicants reveal the names, specialties, geographic locations, or other identifying information about the program(s) to which they have or may apply;*
- 2. Request that applicants reveal preference signal(s) if in a specialty participating in preference signaling;*
- 3. Request that applicants reveal any information pertaining to the interviews they were offered, accepted, declined, or attended;*
- 4. Request that applicants reveal ranking preferences;*
- 5. Suggest or inform applicants that placement on a rank order list or a SOAP preference list is contingent upon submission of a verbal, electronic, or written statement indicating the applicant's preference;*

6. *Make any written, electronic, or verbal offer or contract for appointment to a concurrent year residency or fellowship position before the release of the List of Unfilled Programs; and*
7. *Have any written, electronic, or verbal contact with a matched applicant not matched into their program for the purpose of offering an interview, offering placement in the program, or requesting the applicant apply to a program.*

Applicant recruitment and selection are important components of the transition cycle; however, NRMP policy limits programs from asking questions about applicants' application, interview and ranking intentions because such information does not inform an applicant's alignment with program culture and mission. Communication between applicants and programs should not target whether an applicant or program may rank each other but rather should explore shared similarities, interests, experiences, and professional pursuits.

We also recommend review of the **Match Code of Conduct for Programs** as it encourages programs to limit post-interview communication to the essential information an applicant might request to make a fully informed decision about ranking.

Match participants should aim to conduct their affairs in an ethical and professionally responsible manner, and we are here to support those efforts. As always, please reach out to [policy@nrmp.org](mailto:policy@nrmp.org) with questions or to seek help with any policies.