

State of the IMG Section November 2024

Good afternoon again and welcome to the very first State of the Section update. As we continue to attend these meetings twice every year, many of you attending diligently, I think it behooves us to share what your governing council has done in the time since we last saw each other. This was the impetus behind us starting this portion of the Congress meeting.

Following the Annual meeting in June, the Advisory Commission on Alternate Licensing Models held a symposium with multiple key stakeholders in Washington, DC. Several members of our section were present, and I attended as the Chair of the section to elevate the needs and concerns of our section. You will hear a bit more about the work of the commission later today. While many of you are well aware of the introduced and enacted legislation that directly impacts IMGs and their integration into the US workforce, many in our House of Medicine remain unaware. Thus, under the leadership of our immediate-past Chair, Dr. Natalia Solenkova the IMG Section collaborated with the Council on Medical Education to write a resolution for this meeting – Resolution 203 in Ref Com B. The goal is to better educate our House about the upcoming and anticipated changes as well as update AMA policy about the need for residency training to practice in the US.

In August, your Governing Council convened in Chicago along with the other sections of the AMA to work on our strategic plan. This meeting, held annually, allows GC members to meet with leadership of other sections and develop collaborative plans, resolutions, and educational offerings. Our strategic plan has 4 main objectives: 1. To support and advocate for IMGs throughout their professional careers, 2. To advance impactful policies that address issues faced by IMGs, 3. To build relationships within the AMA and to serve as a resource to outside organizations, and 4. To identify leadership opportunities to available to IMG leaders. Our strategic plan rests on our members. We need engaged and involved members to serve as mentors for IMGs applying to or entering residencies, to serve as speakers for webinars around residency applications and the Match process, to join our resolution and policy committee and develop ideas for resolutions, to reach out to your GC members if you identify issues that we can engage the AMA board on, and to apply to leadership roles. And most of all, we need you all to continue to attend and participate in the work of this Section.

Recognizing the role of IMGs in the US healthcare workforce and in the House of Medicine, the AMA IMG Section sponsored a table at the Annual meeting of Project

IMG. Project IMG is a private networking group that aims to advance IMG entrance into the US workforce. Former Board Chair, Dr. Willie Underwood provided remarks in their “Leaders in Healthcare Panel.” Our presence at the meeting resulted in several new members.

In October, we held our annual IMG Recognition Week. In a webinar with over 100 registrants, our very own Dr. George Abraham shared the path for IMGs in the US and highlighted the multitude of ways IMGs work to advance the health of vulnerable populations. As we have done before, we also recognized two Mentors of the year: Dr. Hector Arreaza, MD - associate program director at Rio Bravo Family Medicine Residency in Bakersfield, California who has made a difference for many IMGs.

And Dr. Kim Yu, MD – an IMG physician from Mission Viejo CA who received great accolades from students applying for residency.

In previous years, as many of you in this room would remember as past GC members, the handbook review was done primarily by members of the Governing Council. In breaking with past traditions and with the hopes to engage more members of our Section, we invited members registered for this meeting to join our Handbook review committee. We received 12 interested members and are proud to share that the handbook items you received were guided by members of the Section and not just your GC. We also provided advance notice to our registered members about our agenda as well as the active items for this meeting in the hopes to allow for more discussion during the Congress meeting and allow ample time to discuss other business. We of course, remain open to ideas about how we can do this better and involve more members of our Section.

Started initially on the recommendation and a motion made during a Congress meeting by our former chair Dr. Kamalika Roy and propelled by Dr. Venkat Rao, the GC along with IOP review committee appointed by Dr. Ricardo Correa has worked hard to update the Internal Operating Procedures of the Section for them to reflect our current practices and to make them more equitable. A notable change we made is for the dissolution of the Nomination Committee as it was felt to be gatekeeping people’s ability to run for the Governing Council. I am happy to share, that after 2 years of work under the leadership of two of our past chairs Dr. Ricardo Correa and Dr. Natalia Solenkova, the updates have been accepted by our Section through the online forum and sent to the Council on Constitution and Bylaws for review and approval. This was a heavy lift that required many hours of work by all those involved.

Started by our former Chair, Dr. Deepak Kumar, the AMA Foundation now has an IMG Honor Fund. As the needs of IMGs are different from other recipients of Foundation awards we are continuing to work with the Foundation to develop programming that works specifically for IMGs. I encourage you to please donate to the IMG Honor fund today or at some point during the Interim meeting.

Finally, as a non-permanent Section of the AMA we are subject to a 5-year review. Carolyn has completed the necessary documentation for the IMG Section renewal and we anticipate that the status of our Section will be renewed during Annual 2025. In conclusion, the state of our Section is strong, and it is strong because of our members like you.