

NRMP NATIONAL RESIDENT MATCHING PROGRAM

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RECORD NUMBER OF APPLICANTS MATCHED TO RESIDENCY PROGRAMS *Number Highest in the Program's 52-year History*

Washington, D.C., March 18, 2004 - At noon today, more than 25,000 applicants in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) learned which residency program they will enter for medical training. Results from the 2004 "Match" indicate that the NRMP continues to be a successful and effective process for both resident applicants and residency programs. This year, 25,246 active applicants participated in the Match, a 5.3 percent increase in participation since 2003. For the first time ever, more than 20,000 matches were made to first- and second-year residency positions.

"The notable increase in applicants and residency positions this year indicates a high level of support and a continued confidence in the fairness of the Match," said James Taylor, president of the NRMP Board of Directors. "It also once again demonstrates how important the Match is to medical education and sends a clear message to those who want to dismantle the process."

The Match, conducted annually by the NRMP, matches the preferences of applicants with the preferences of residency programs, in order to fill the available training positions at U.S. teaching hospitals. The Match was established, at the request of medical students, to provide a fair and impartial transition to the graduate medical education experience necessary for all physicians.

This year the match rate for U.S. medical school seniors seeking first-year residency (PGY-1) positions was 92.9 percent, which means that almost 93 percent of graduating U.S. medical students were successfully matched to an open position in a participating residency program. The match rate for U.S. medical school seniors has remained high, between 92 and 94 percent, for the past 20 years. More than three-fourths (76.8 percent) of all 2004 Match participants, including international medical school graduates and other non-U.S. medical school seniors, were matched to a residency position.

More than 80 percent of all matched applicants obtained one of their top three residency program choices. Matched U.S. medical school seniors enjoyed a very high success rate: 85.4 percent were paired with one of their top three program choices. Similarly, 83.4 percent of all other groups of matched applicants, including international medical graduates, were paired with one of their top three choices.

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Data from each year's Match serves as an indicator of career interests among residency applicants. Some highlights for U.S. medical school seniors:

- U.S. medical school seniors filled 84.8 percent of the available first-year general surgery positions, up from 82.7 percent last year. This marks the second successive year of an increase in the surgery fill rate for U.S. seniors.
- This year 78.8 percent of PGY-1 family practice residency positions were filled, up 2.5 percentage points from last year. U.S. medical school seniors matched to 41.4 percent of those positions, a slight decrease from 2003. Family practice programs have experienced a steady decrease in the percentage of U.S. medical school seniors matching to their positions since 1996.
- The percentage of PGY-1 positions in obstetrics-gynecology filled by U.S. medical school seniors declined again this year (to 65.1 percent), although the percentage of these positions filled by all applicants to the Match has remained steady over the past several years (91-94 percent).
- Pathology programs continue to experience a higher percentage of positions filled through the Match, a trend that began four years ago. This trend also holds true for U.S. medical school senior applicants to these programs; the percentage of PGY-1 pathology positions filled by U.S. medical school seniors has almost doubled since 2000 (to 61.2 percent in 2004).
- The number of U.S. medical school seniors matching to psychiatry programs has consistently increased over the past few years. In 2004, 62.8 percent of PGY-1 positions in psychiatry were filled by U.S. medical school seniors.
- While the percentage of PGY-1 internal medicine positions filled by U.S. medical school seniors declined slightly from last year (to 54.8 percent), the percentage of all positions filled through the Match increased for the third year in a row, to 97.4 percent.

There were 641 couples in the Match this year, the highest number ever. The 2004 Match rate for individuals who participated as a couple was 93.9 percent; for 584 of those couples both partners matched to their respective residency program preferences. A couple is defined by the NRMP as any two applicants who participate in the Match as partners.

The Match Week process began Monday, March 15, when applicants were informed whether they had been matched to a residency program, though the name of that program was not provided. On Tuesday, March 16, the locations of remaining unfilled residency programs were released to unmatched applicants, who then contacted the programs about the open positions. Today, the matched applicants learned where they will spend at least their first year of residency training. Many medical school seniors will find out where they have been matched by attending "Match Day Ceremonies" taking place today at medical schools across the country.

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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.