

Doctors With Borders: Innovative Training Certifies Advanced Communication Skill Set for Physicians

For thousands of medical graduates competing for US residency training each year, they'll need the skills of a lawyer, FBI Negotiator & Instagram Influencer.

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Mission:Residency, a medical education organization that specializes in guiding international medical graduates (IMGs) to secure residency in the United States, today announced its participation in 'Integrated Communication Medical Doc' (ICMD) Certification Training. In addition to

ensuring that a residency candidate has met all of the traditional requirements for programs, ICMD Certification also ensures that a candidate has developed competency in a wide range of communication skills. Candidates complete an interactive curriculum to develop & utilize

techniques more often associated with other professions - lawyers, FBI negotiators + profilers, psychologists, CEO's, even Instagram Influencers - and integrate them into their residency interviews, training & medical practice.

ICMD-Certification Training is the result of a collaborative effort of doctors from a wide-range of specialties and cultural backgrounds over a 5+ year period. Spearheaded by Mission:Residency's academic director, Dr. Brian Mark Bolante - an IMG himself - has spent over a decade helping candidates develop their applications & interview skills to increase their chance to successfully Match - hopes that

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ICMD-certification training gives IMG's the tools necessary to connect with others, so they can re-connect with what they they love doing - saving lives as practicing physicals in the US.”

Brian Mark Bolante, MD

ICMD raises the bar for what programs & patients should expect from internationally medical graduates in terms of communication & leadership skills.



Training sessions take place online

“With all of the exams that physicians have to take to earn ECFMG Certification, it’s odd that there isn’t a single requirement designed to address the things that patients REALLY measure: communication skills, compassion, and patience,” said Dr. Bolante. “For candidates worried that their USMLE scores aren’t good enough or they graduated too long ago to Match, I ask them one question: When’s the last time you’ve ever asked a doctor treating you what their USMLE scores were? The fact is we’re just looking for doctors that we can trust. To earn that primarily relies on a doctor’s ability to communicate effectively.”



ICMD-certification training is designed to give doctors the tools necessary to connect with each patients, improving outcomes through increased compliance.

The medical education community has been working to address the issue in the United States. Harvard Medical School and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine are among the increasing number of programs in recent years that have developed patient-clinician communication skills training for American medical graduates (AMGs). ICMD certification Training is the first of its kind specifically designed for international medical graduates applying for US residency.

“It’s no secret that patient today is more likely to make medical decisions based on Google searches, television ads and social media because it’s part of their daily lives and so easily accessible. In the war to win the hearts & minds of their patients, doctors are competing against a combination of technology & marketing specialists trained to win with communication skills. Most doctors get one shot - one clinical visit - to earn a patient’s trust. They’ve clearly got the medical knowledge to help, so let’s give them the ICMD skills to deliver it. It’s what patients & the residency programs that will take the time to train them are looking for.”

To that end, programs have put communication skills at the top of the list of factors that determine which residencies they want - and who gets left out in the cold. A recent [New York Times article](#) that explored doctors struggles getting into residency, they cited that as many as 10,000 physicians fall into the ‘chronically unmatched’ category, unable to secure training & finding other means to make ends meet.

Dr Ruth W. Deya, a 42-year-old IMG from Kenya, trained with Mission Residency last year and recently matched into a competitive internal medicine program in Seattle, WA. Having graduated medical school back in 2004, she knows the struggle all too well. “Chances for interviews were

few and far between, " Dr Gitau recalls, "and as an old graduate with multiple USMLE attempts, I knew as a mother of two that I had to be realistic about my chances. I also knew that if and when an opportunity did come, I had to make the most of it and be prepared. For me, improving my communication skills allowed me to share how I've grown over the last 15-plus years and to make a connection effectively in less than 15 minutes in an online Zoom meeting."

Dr Brian adds, "I've come across thousands of doctors over the years that have come to practice in the United States and while they may differ in their native languages & religious beliefs, the one thing that unites them is that they've all made massive sacrifices to get here. Each of them should have an opportunity to share the stories that define who they are beyond test scores & transcripts. ICMD-certification training gives them the tools necessary to do that, so they get back to making a living doing what they love doing - saving lives."

The data & science certainly support his statement.

~ Residency programs value communication skills over test scores: In the most recent [NRMP Program Director Survey](#), the Top 4 Factors used to select candidates for residency are all communication-based, often related to the interview day: (1) Interpersonal Skills (2) Interaction with faculty during interview & visit (3) Interaction with house staff during interview and visit (4) Feedback from current residents.

~ According to the US Bureau of Labor & Statistics: a practicing physician requires strong communication skills, compassion & patience, in addition to the traditional skillset of problem-solving ability, physical stamina & dexterity. As of April 2021, outside of clearing candidates for English proficiency & basic communication skills, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) Certification required for IMG's to begin US Residency does not assess a candidate's advanced communication skills.

~ Covid-19 Outcomes: [Researchers discovered a correlation](#) between Covid-19 patients' psychological response & their doctors' communication skills. Based on this study's findings, appropriate and continuous training will advance physicians' communication skills in the form of exercises that could be as simple as class- or lecture-based activities, or using technology-based learning.

Mission Residency will be offering ICMD certification training via the 360 Mentorship Program to a limited number of candidates in the Spring of 2021. For more information about ICMD or to apply for one of the training seats, visit www.MissionResidency.com/ICMDcertification

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