



February 2004

Dear Colleague,

As medical students concerned about your future medical training, you may be aware of the legal challenge to the Match (National Resident Matching Program). This proposed class action lawsuit threatens to destroy this service to students and undermine the quality of our graduate medical education system. As the chairs of the Association of American Medical Colleges' Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) and the Organization of Resident Representatives, we are contacting current students and residents concerning the proposed class action lawsuit because we want you to be aware of the situation and provide you with important information regarding the lawsuit.

As you may know, prior to the Match, residency positions were obtained through a chaotic and often unfair process. As a result, *students* were directly involved in starting the Match over fifty years ago to facilitate the residency application process and make it more fair for the student applicant, and they remain directly involved today. The reality is that this process is an enormous benefit to both applicants and residency programs. Over the years, literally hundreds of thousands of medical students have gone through this process and today, 87% of students currently participating in the Match receive one of their top three residency choices. Despite this success, three residents and 15 law firms are claiming that the Match harms graduating students.

As fellow students and residents, we would like to ensure that you are informed about the pertinent issues and the impact this lawsuit could have on you, your training program, and graduate medical education in general. We believe that when you examine the facts surrounding this case, you will discover that this lawsuit has no merit. The plaintiffs allege in their complaint that the Match is part of a conspiracy to unfairly limit resident stipends and to force residents to work long hours. In recent months, they have also alleged that the Match is somehow discriminatory and stifles racial diversity. There is no basis for these claims, as Dr. Donald Wilson, the Dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and President-elect of the Association for Minority Academic Physicians explained in his recent rebuttal letter to several members of Congress. The Match does not play any role in determining the stipend that residents receive or the duty hours they are assigned. Nor does the Match disadvantage minority students; to the contrary, it encourages equal access for all students to all programs.

We officially support the Match because it provides students and residents with a fair and equitable and orderly process through which to obtain residency and fellowship positions. Your residency program's reputation depends in large part on the ability to secure the best possible residents or fellows. Without the Match, your program's future reputation is more vulnerable. Furthermore, if the plaintiffs are successful in getting their case certified as a class and winning damages, the quality of your education and the education of thousands of future doctors yet to come will undoubtedly be affected by the enormous financial burden that would be placed on the medical education system.

Indeed, even if the lawsuit is unsuccessful, which we certainly hope will be the case, it will impose an enormous financial drain on the residency programs which have been sued and require individuals associated with those programs to devote time and energy to the lawsuit rather than the delivery of healthcare or the training of residents.

We hope that you will take the time to learn more about this troubling situation and that you will conclude, as we have, that destruction of the Match is in no one's best interests. The Match provides an organized, student-centered process for obtaining residency and fellowship positions. You can access accurate information regarding this lawsuit and join us in registering your support for the Match by visiting the Web site www.savethematch.org. or by consulting the AAMC site at www.aamc.org

Sincerely,



Yvette Martin
Chair, AAMC Organization of Student Representatives



Jane E. D. Broecker, MD,
Chair, AAMC Organization of Resident Representatives