



December 18, 2020

**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
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Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to alert you to a concern with residency interview numbers reported by many of our senior medical education and student affairs leaders this year. Feedback we've collected at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) suggests a maldistribution of residency interview invitations. We are seeing students in the highest tier receiving a larger number of interviews per person than in past years, leaving other students – including those in the middle of the class – with fewer interviews than we would anticipate based on their qualifications. Everyone desires a successful match with programs filling and students matching, and we ask everyone in the community to consider what role you can take in making that happen. The AAMC recommends the following steps when appropriate for you, your program, or your institution:

**For DIOs/Program Directors/Program Coordinators:** Interview and rank enough candidates to create a successful rank list. You may need to rank more applicants to fill this year, as the highest tier applicants have so many interviews. Be sure to rank many applicants whose academic performance and experiences are like those who have matched into your program in previous years. Recruiting a diverse pool of residents is one of several ways that programs can address social determinants of health, diversify resident research projects, and broaden perspectives on culturally-responsive patient care.

**For Student Affairs Officers and Advisors:** Advise all students about this year's unique challenges with interviews. Encourage those holding more interviews than needed to release them so that other students have an opportunity to be invited to interview. Advise all students to proceed using guidance from the NRMP's [Charting Outcomes in the Match, 2020](#). Discuss any additional steps that students with fewer interview offers than anticipated might take at this point to maximize their likelihood of matching (for example, applying to preliminary positions for which applications are still being accepted).

**For Students:** Consider releasing some interviews if you are holding more than needed, allowing your fellow students access to these interview opportunities. If you have fewer interview offers than anticipated, discuss with your student affairs officer or advisor any additional steps you might take at this point to maximize your likelihood of matching (for example, applying to preliminary positions for which applications are still being accepted). Proceed using guidance from the NRMP's [Charting Outcomes in the Match, 2020](#). Also consider ranking all the programs where you interviewed unless you truly cannot see yourself in the program after your interview.

Thank you for your attention. We recognize that this year's challenges are not necessarily unique but are certainly more widespread. If you have any questions, feel free to email Kate McOwen, AAMC senior director of educational affairs, at [kmcowen@aamc.org](mailto:kmcowen@aamc.org) who will distribute them to the appropriate person to respond.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Whelan".

Alison Whelan, MD  
Chief Medical Education Officer