

Canadians studying abroad (CSAs)

Background:

Canadians Studying Aboard (CSAs) are individuals who are born in Canada but pursue their medical training outside of North America. The number of CSAs has grown exponentially since 2000 and today approximately 130 schools in almost 30 countries have Canadian students enrolled in medicine.¹ There are approximately 3,500 Canadian students enrolled in medical school abroad.² Of those, more than 90 per cent want to return to Canada for a portion of their postgraduate training.^{3 4}

It can be very challenging for CSAs to complete their medical training in Canada and secure a residency position. Last year in Canada there were 1,869 international medical graduates (including CSAs) who did not secure a residency position.⁵

In the 2014 CaRMs match, 10 Dalhousie graduates did not have a residency position. Six of these students were 2014 graduates, and 4 graduated in 2013. According to the National IMG Database, in 2013 Nova Scotia reported having 72 IMG residents and 1 Fellow (excluding visa trainees).⁶

Despite the unknowns, Canadians and Nova Scotians are choosing to pursue their medical education outside of North America at schools that are not accredited by the Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) and the US Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME).

Walsh et al. (2011) identified that some international medical schools are targeting North American students, who are prepared to pay high tuition. CSAs are often paying much higher education costs than CMGs. The average annual tuition cost ranges from \$12,250 (CAD) in Poland to \$66,369 (CAD) in Australia.⁷ The CSA median debt is \$160,000 (CAD) compared to the 2007 CMG median debt of \$71,000 (CAD).⁸ This is significant debt for a Nova Scotian to take on without knowing that they can complete their medical training and practice in Canada.

¹ Canadian Resident Matching Service (2014). www.carms.ca. Returning to Canada. Retrieved August 13, 2014 from <https://www.carms.ca/en/returning-to-canada>

² Banner, S., McKiver, A., Rattanasithy, S., Cassie, J., Woodward, C., & Ford, R. (2010). Canadian Students Studying Medicine Abroad. *CaRMS*. Retrieved July 29 from https://www.carms.ca/pdfs/2010_CSA_Report/CaRMS_2010_CSA_Report.pdf

³ Walsh, A., Banner, S., Schabert, I., Amson, H., Bowmer, M.I., & Granata, B. (2011). International medical graduates - current issues. The Future of Medical Education in Canada: Postgraduate Project. Retrieved from http://www.afmc.ca/pdf/fmec/05_Walsh_IMG%20Current%20Issues.pdf

⁴ Banner, S., McKiver, A., Rattanasithy, S., Cassie, J., Woodward, C., & Ford, R. (2010). Canadian Students Studying Medicine Abroad. *CaRMS*. Retrieved July 29 from https://www.carms.ca/pdfs/2010_CSA_Report/CaRMS_2010_CSA_Report.pdf

⁵ CaRMS (2014) retrieved on Oct. 10, 2014 from http://www.carms.ca/assets/upload/Match%20reports/2014%20R-1%20match/EN/Table%201%20-%20Summary%20of%20Match%20Results_English.pdf

⁶ Canadian Post-M.D. Education Registry (2012) The National IMG Database Report retrieved July 21, 2014 from http://www.caper.ca/~assets/documents/2012_CAPER_National_IMG_Database_Report.pdf

⁷ Banner et al. 2010

⁸ Banner et al. 2010

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Each year, more Nova Scotians choose to attend foreign medical schools and are disappointed with the challenges they face when trying to return to Canada. Unfortunately, many CSAs are not aware of the risks and challenges of training outside of North America and assume they will be able to return to Nova Scotia.

During the Canadian Medical Association's (CMA) General Council, delegates passed a motion calling for the CMA to support the development of educational material for students who are considering attending medical school outside Canada.

A similar approach should be adopted in Nova Scotia.

Proposed AGM Motion:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT *Doctors Nova Scotia will work with the Canadian Medical Association and other stakeholders to ensure that Nova Scotians are educated about the risks and challenges of pursuing medical education outside of Canada.*