



TRAINING, WORKING, AND BELONGING:

How International Medical
Graduates Safeguard
Minority Mental Health



*"Belonging is not a small thing; it is
deeply connected to mental health."*

DELIVERING CARE WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST

31%

of child and adolescent psychiatrists in the U.S. are international medical graduates (IMGs).

These IMGs deliver care across diverse communities throughout the country and play a key role in increasing access to care.

IMGs use their lived experiences to better serve the growing population of American children of immigrant families.



*“As a Hispanic woman physician in psychiatry, I quickly discovered how reassuring it was for patients to **have a provider they could relate to.** It’s often I see the relief on my patients’ faces when we meet.*

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*Being able to discuss the challenges of adapting to a new country, navigating migration-related fears, and expressing their emotions in **their native language** without the need for translation made it easier to navigate these feelings."*



ADDRESSING GROWING WORKFORCE SHORTAGES



IMGs practice in communities where physicians are scarce.

Lower-income rural and urban communities face the greatest health care workforce shortages. IMGs are granted special visas and waivers if they commit to practice in these underserved areas.

When visa programs for IMGs are threatened, vulnerable communities often bear the highest cost.



“As an IMG, I have experienced the painful side of immigration and training: struggling to be accepted, facing rejection, and constantly feeling the need to prove my worth.

*When my residency was terminated, it **shook my sense of identity, safety, and belonging in this country.***

"It shook my sense of identity, safety, and belonging."

*That experience has shaped the way I care for immigrant children and families. It has taught me that **belonging is not a small thing; it is deeply connected to mental health.***

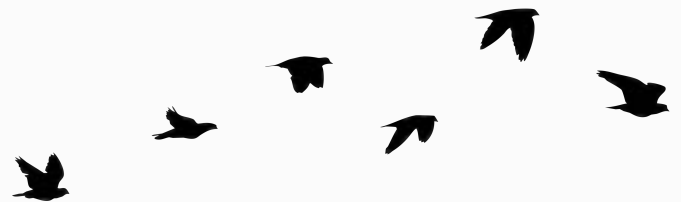


FACING GROWING UNCERTAINTY



Recent immigration and health policies are making it harder for IMGs to practice here.

The choice to train and work in America has never been an easy one. But new policies are making the sacrifice feel too big, and the reward too out of reach.



The U.S. healthcare system relies on IMGs to provide care. Our systems should help—not hinder—their commitment to service.



“As a young child, I was undocumented, and I still remember the quiet fear and uncertainty that can accompany living in the shadows. My family eventually became U.S. citizens, but those early experiences shaped the physician I am today.

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When I sit with children and families who are worried about immigration, separation, or belonging, I understand that fear in a deeply personal way.

Caring for these families is more than part of my job, it is an opportunity to be the safe, reassuring adult that I once needed.”



THANK YOU.

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RESOURCES

Shaligram D, Khan M, Sidhu, S. International Medical Graduates as Drivers of Healthcare Access, Innovation, and Economic Growth. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 2026.

Workforce Data

U.S. Physician Workforce Data from the American Association of Medical Colleges was used in the creation of this document. For more, go to:

www.aamc.org/workforce