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CHOOSING A RESIDENCY PROGRAM: THE MATCH

Upon completing the interview process, you should review the programs you visited to recall their differing characteristics. The similarities between programs far outweigh their differences and the attributes you value may be hard to identify initially. The process of selecting a residency program begins with determining your career goals and preferences. This is a daunting task made manageable when deconstructed into a discrete series of options. As each choice is made, you get closer to determining the program that is right for you. Once you have determined what you want, *The Match* helps you get it.

THE NRMP MATCH

The National Residency Match Program (NRMP) is a private, nonprofit corporation that provides an independent matching service. Established in 1952, the NRMP match provides a uniform date of appointment to graduate medical education positions, providing the opportunity for both applicants and programs to make selections only after all of the interviews have been conducted and information obtained. Without the match system, positions would be offered and accepted during the interview process, forcing both parties to make binding decisions before having explored all of their options. Since 1998, the match has been powered by the *Applicant Proposing Algorithm*. The algorithm provides an opportunity for the applicants to rank programs based solely on the applicant's interest, independent of the perceived interest from the programs. An applicant will match into the program listed highest on their list that has (1) also ranked the applicant and (2) has not filled all available positions with higher ranked candidates. A detailed description and illustrative example of the algorithm can be found at www.nrmp.org/res_match/about_res/algorithms.html. In short, consideration should only be made for your program preferences when creating the rank-order list.

Registration in the NRMP occurs in January of your graduation year and requires compliance with *Match Participation Agreement*, which outlines the enrollment requirements and contractual obligations of the match.

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