



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

BRINGING DIVERSITY TO HEALTHCARE



About us

WHO WE ARE

AIMGA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the successful integration of International Medical Graduates (IMGs). We currently have 885+ members.

CORE VALUES

Our core values include: Being responsive to the needs of our members, working together, having a professional and friendly attitude, and delivering quality programs. Essentially, we keep our members' best interests at the heart of what we do.

VISION & PURPOSE

Improve healthcare through the re-engagement of IMGs into the Canadian healthcare system. Our goal is to equip IMGs with the information, skills, and tools they require to make informed decisions about their future careers and to integrate successfully.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Fadhil Khalil	Director
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Dr. Salim Hamid	Director

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Deidre Lake	Executive Director
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Teresa Lau	CTP & Employment Coordinator
Cindy Cheung	Program & Communications Coordinator
Shola Adelakun	Program Administrator

AIMGA EDMONTON

Mahenaz Layton	Program Coordinator
Tisha Raj	Outreach & Communications Coordinator
Monica Spencer	Program Administrator

TABLE OF

CONTENTS

Board Chair Report	04	AIMGA Programs & Services	10
Executive Director Report	05	Feature Article	12
Financial Report	06	Member Testimonials	14
Our Members At-A-Glance	08	Special Thanks	15



*The right **person** in the right **seat** at the right **time**. We are here to assist at every step in the licensure process from application to integration.*

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

Distinguished guests, members, and staff of AIMGA, it gives me immense pleasure to present this report at the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Alberta International Medical Graduate Association.

It, indeed, was an honour to have served as the chair of AIMGA for a fourth year and I am glad that AIMGA has made remarkable progress since its' inception in 2000. I appreciate all those whose commitment and wisdom started us on our way. I am even more grateful to those who work so hard in this current stage of our growth.

I am delighted to begin my report by acknowledging the active involvement and engagement of our members in a wide range of initiatives and their great efforts that have finally put them on the pathway to becoming a physician in the Canadian healthcare system. Congratulations to successful members who have achieved success by obtaining a position in Residency, the Practice Readiness Assessment, or the Alberta Clinical Surgical Assistant Program (ACSAP).

Here are some highlights of the year 2019:

167

The number of clients who reported having passed licensing exams in 2018 (QE1, NAC, QE2)

31

The number of clients who secured residency seats. The total number of residency seats allocated to IMGs was 38.

8

The number of clients who obtained a position with the Alberta Clinical and Surgical Assistant Program where they are provided with a CPSA limited license to practice

13

The number of clients who reported receiving a CPSA eligibility letter deeming them eligible for the Practice Readiness Assessment route. Of these 13, 6 are now in practice.

In addition to our regular programs, AIMGA focused on collaborating with stakeholder groups around educational initiatives and implementing programs that increase medical knowledge, clinical skills, communication, and professionalism such as the introduction of M-CAP Online and the clinical lectures and workshops.

The Board of Directors wishes to thank our members for sharing our vision and for their active participation in our collective activities. We acknowledge the dedication and achievements of our staff members. We would especially like to recognize the consistent and excellent work done by our Executive Director, Deidre Lake. Her vision, the dedication of staff and volunteers in the implementation of the Association's strategic directions is impressive. We further express our appreciation to our funders, the Governments of Canada and Alberta in support our work. As the Chair of the Association, I extend my praise to our board members for their commitment to the Association, and their various contributions.

Dear members, we continued to grow our membership and strengthen our governance and operations. To date, our membership comprises of 885 active members in Good Standing. The members of the Board of Directors and staff are committed to the vision of the organization and have guided the development and implementation of our strategic priorities.

Finally, as we move forward in 2020 and beyond, I am proud of what AIMGA accomplished in 2019 and excited about the future. Our Association is strong and vibrant, and together we will continue our efforts to reach our goal to successfully integrate IMGs into the Canadian system.

Cordially,

Mohammad Ali Ashraf Lasker
Board Chair, AIMGA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting and *Bringing Diversity to Healthcare* event!

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge our funders. Without the support of the Governments of Canada and Alberta, we would not be able to do all that we do in the interest of our membership. Secondly, I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for their continued support in my role as Executive Director. Last, but not least, I'd like to thank the staff for their ongoing support. Your contributions make AIMGA a better place and with your passion to deliver, I can honestly state, we strive to deliver high quality programming and services.

I've been at AIMGA in my role for the past year and a half. When I reflect on my time with the Association, it has been action packed. Leading a non-profit organization where the demands exceed our funding, is a challenge. However, what I love about challenges is that they lend themselves to creative thinking, collaborations, and being specific in what we do. The core values that remain constant for us at AIMGA are: believing in the economic integration of newcomers to Canada, respecting diversity, having meaningful outcomes, and making a positive contribution to the members we serve.

International doctors are particularly vulnerable. They come to Canada highly educated and highly skilled and yet have a complex journey in front of them. The window for arrival, completing examinations, obtaining required proficiency levels, and competing for residency seats is narrowing. It is not easy to navigate the system, to know where to start, and to understand the different provincial requirements and pathways. There's one assessment after another and just when you think you've proven your medical knowledge and skill to enter a Canadian training program, there's usually a new form of assessment or criteria. It can be lengthy and costly. While there's a saying, *things get easier with time*, one could argue the pathways to licensure for IMGs have become more difficult or competitive.

In the past year, we've been hard at work to put the necessary foundation in place upon which to build. We've launched a new website which will allow us to tailor our services based on the needs

of our membership and to provide the evidence we need to seek funds and to report outcomes. As a professional association, we all have a role in advancing the integration of International Medical Graduates in the system. We are creating awareness of the skills and knowledge IMGs bring with them to Canada. We've started our member "spotlight" videos to capture these diverse skill sets. We are asking our membership to keep their profiles up-to-date, so we can advocate on their behalf. It is important our members understand what it means to belong to a professional association. As a professional association, we are placing importance on you being able to make informed decisions about your future career paths. We have launched an IMG survey in collaboration with the University of Calgary.

We've moved away from a first-come, first-serve model to putting the right person, in the right seat, at the right time to ensure we are utilizing resources effectively and providing relevant services based on where our members are in their integration into the system. We've also been working collectively to improve upon the quality and delivery of our programs and services based on your feedback, and we are working to implement a new research and community engagement strategy in partnership with employers and stakeholders.

In the next year, I look forward to *Bringing Diversity to Healthcare*, to creating pathways into the healthcare system for IMGs, and making sure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to integrate successfully. This is what I'm passionate about and I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year.

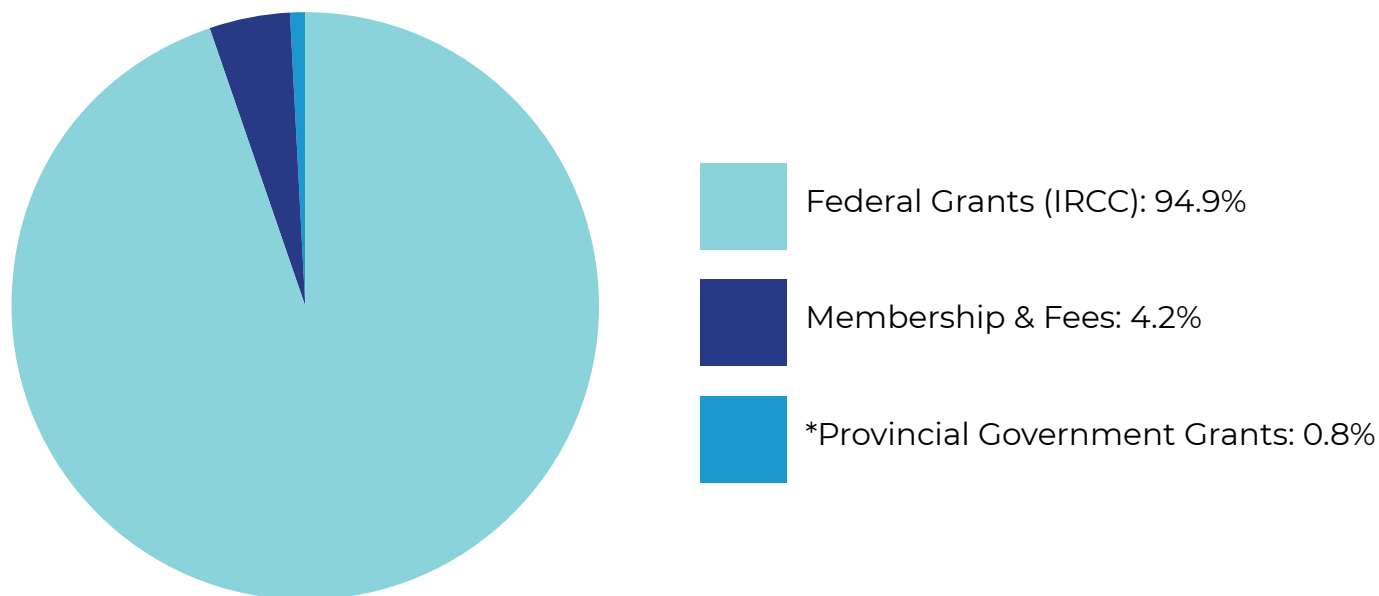
With kindness and respect,

Deidre Lake
Executive Director

"When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too."
-Paulo Coelho

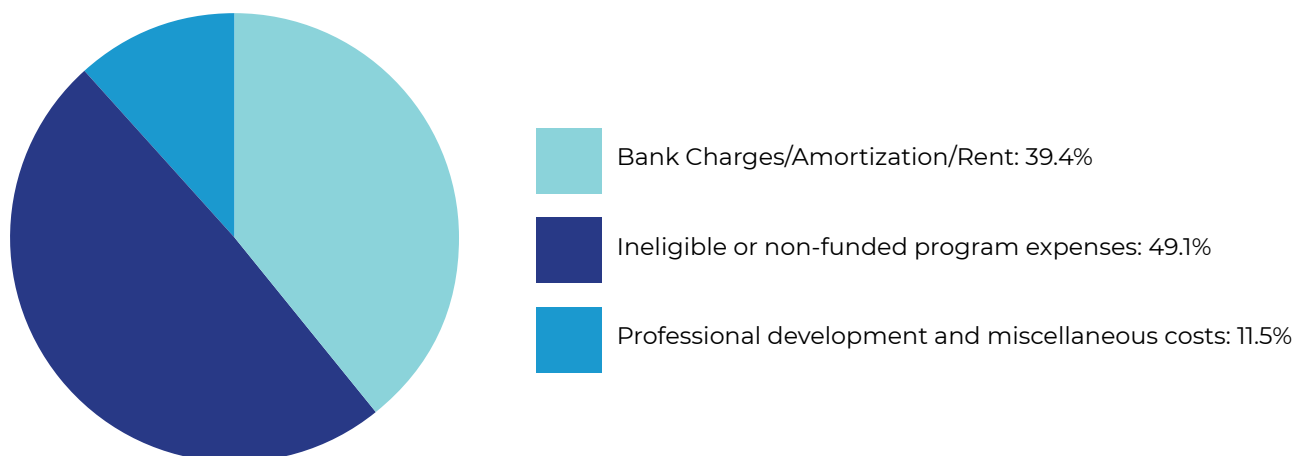
FINANCIAL REPORT

TOTAL REVENUE

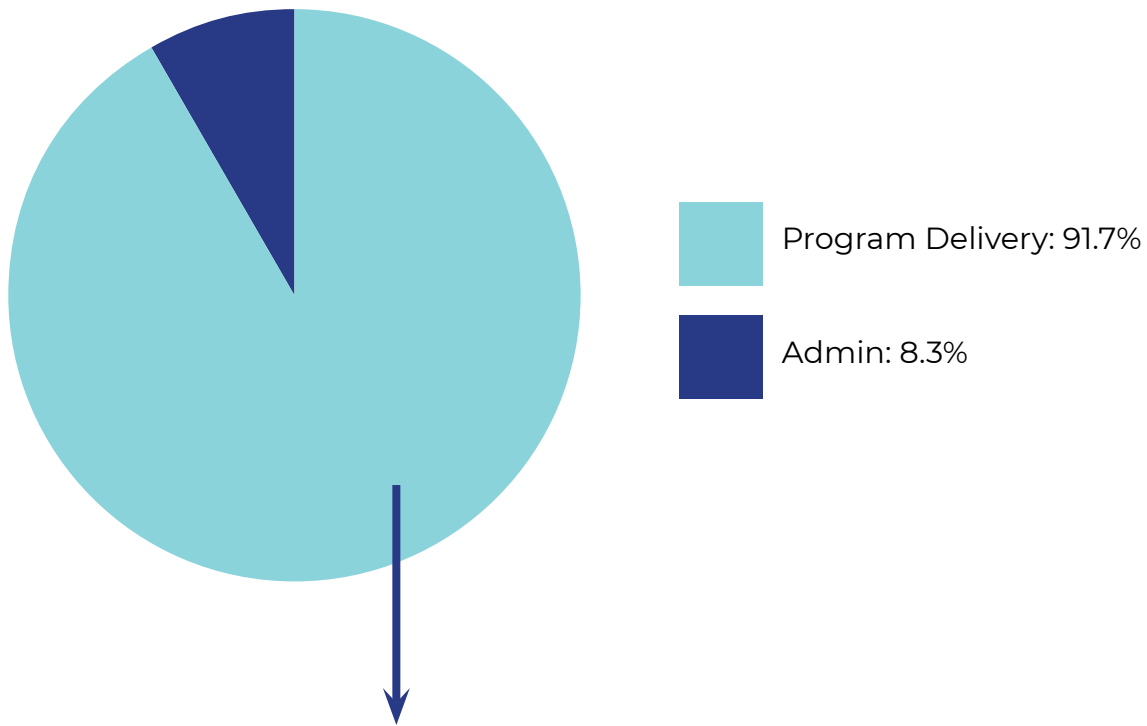


***Provincial Government Grants:** Advance payment received from the Government of Alberta in February of 2019. The majority of these funds were deferred to April 1st to December 31st, and will be reported in this fiscal year.

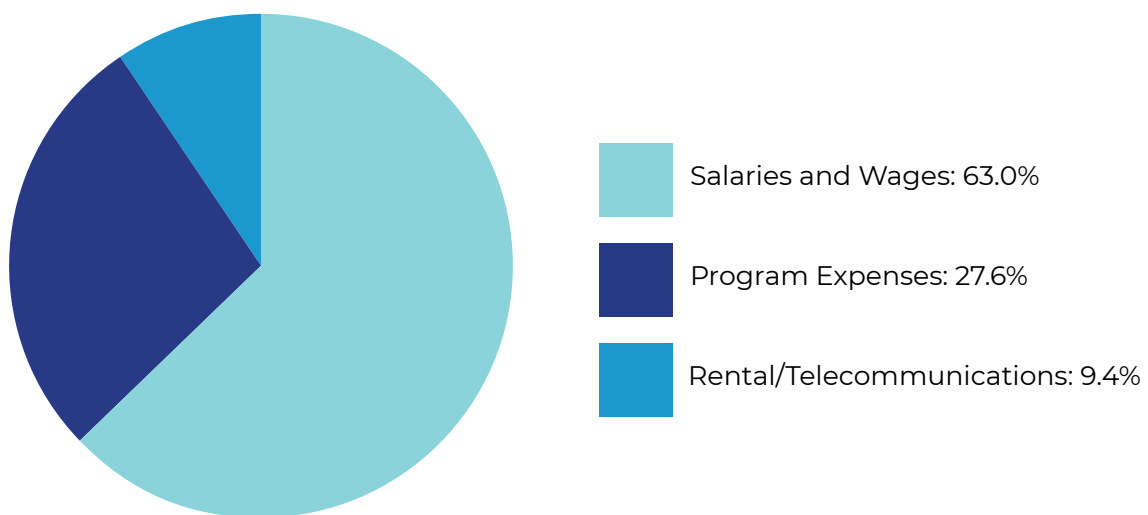
MEMBERSHIP & FEES BREAKDOWN



FEDERAL GRANTS BREAKDOWN



PROGRAM DELIVERY BREAKDOWN



Note: Members and stakeholders who wish to view the detailed financials may request an appointment to view them at AIMGA.

OUR MEMBERS

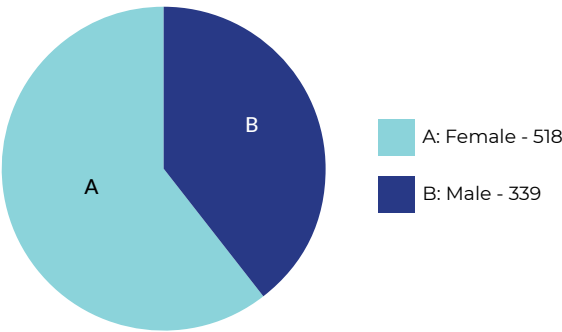
AT-A-GLANCE

TOTAL NUMBER OF
ACTIVE MEMBERS

**as of November 6, 2019*



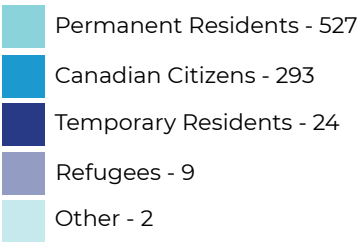
GENDER



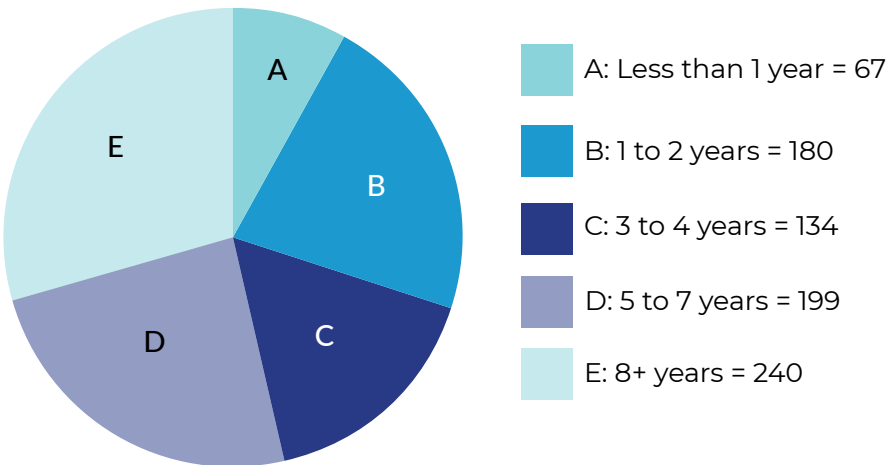
LOCATION



CITIZENSHIP
STATUS



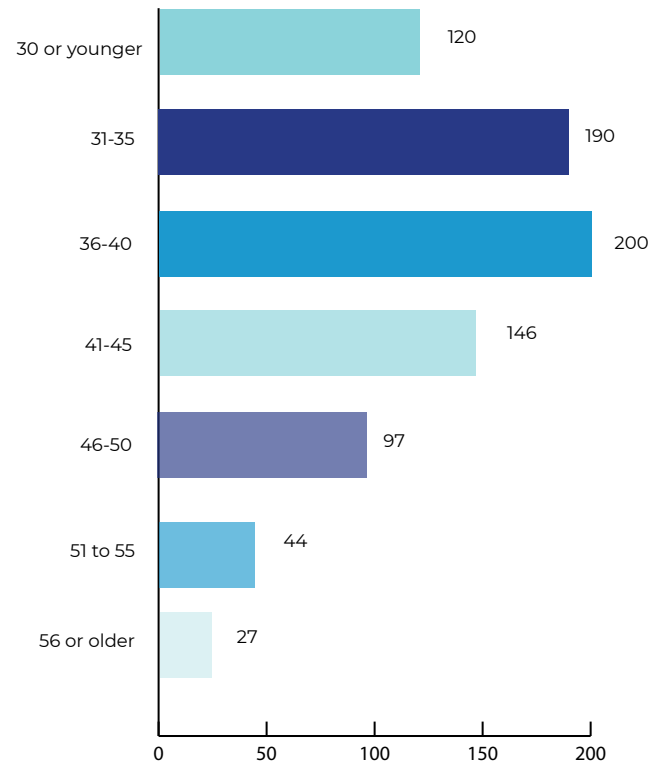
YEARS IN CANADA



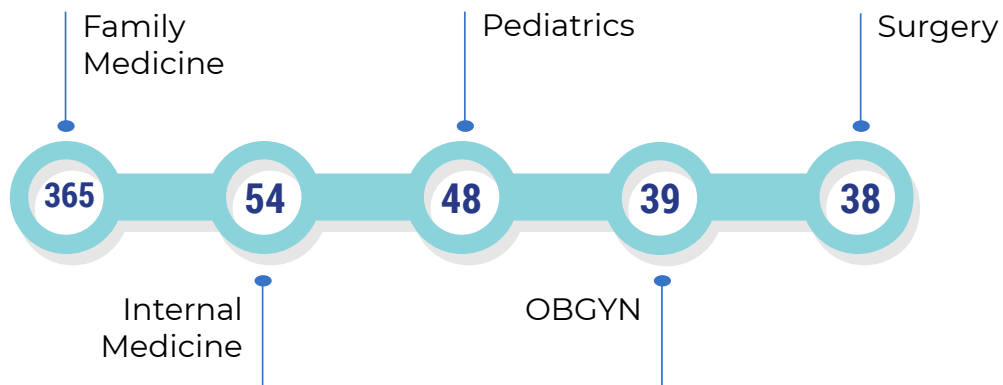
TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



AGE RANGE



TOP 5 AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION*



**with new website, not all active members have completed their profile*

AIMGA

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

AIMGA hosts a New Member Orientation (NMO) which is mandatory for all new AIMGA members. The NMO provides an overview of the pathways to licensure and their requirements as well as an overview of all AIMGA services and programs. The purpose of this session is to provide an understanding of AIMGA and to help determine which pathways and programs are most suitable in members' next steps towards integration.

STUDY GROUPS FOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS

The moderated Study Groups for Canada's medical licensing examinations present an excellent opportunity for IMGs to connect with peers and to work together to prepare for their medical exams. All Study Groups are moderated by a volunteer IMG who is interested in assuming the responsibility to facilitate the learning of their fellows. The volunteer is someone who has demonstrated a high level of success on the exam.

AIMGA organizes Study Groups for MCCQE1, MCCQE2, and NAC OSCE. These groups are supported by clinical workshops that are open to study group members. Workshops may include an overview of common cases in the following areas: Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Emergency Medicine, MSK, and Obstetrics/Gynaecology. Other workshops include: communication skills such as dealing with difficult patients, and breaking bad news.

OSCE PREPARATION COURSE

The OSCE Preparation Course is a 2-day preparation program. The first day includes an overview of the exam, a hands-on workshop focused on scenario-based training to practice clinical, procedural, and communication skills. The second day includes a mock OSCE where candidates are rated by examiners using clinical and communication checklists. Performances are videotaped for educational and preparation purposes. Following the mock exam, there is a group feedback session where examiners share their observations and provide tips and strategies for success on the OSCE.

MMI PREPARATION COURSE

The Multiple-Mini Interview (MMI) Preparation Course is a 2-day preparation course. The first day includes an educational component where candidates are exposed to different question types and strategies for responding. This session includes various sample scenarios. The second day includes a mock MMI where candidates are evaluated and videotaped. This session ends with a group feedback session where examiners are asked to share their observations and provide tips for success on the MMI.

OBSERVERSHIP PROGRAM

AIMGA's Observership Program is open throughout the year and accommodates IMGs who qualify for program participation. The observerships are an important step of the residency application process as they offer an excellent opportunity for IMGs to learn in the specific context of the Canadian healthcare system, to increase knowledge, to build professional networks and to obtain feedback from licensed Alberta physicians and medical educators.

IELTS PREPARATION PROGRAM

The IELTS preparation course at AIMGA is designed for IMGs who need to enhance their language skills and develop test-taking strategies in order to achieve the required IELTS score and meet the language proficiency requirements for the licensure process. The course content mirrors the IELTS Academic specific language tasks with a focus on each of the language skills. The problems with grammar and sentence structure needed for success in IELTS, especially for improving writing scores, are discussed in detail. Practice tests with an emphasis on common errors are included for IMG test takers in all strands: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. Additional time is spent on the area of writing.

CaRMS PREPARATION PROGRAM

The CaRMS Preparation Program (formerly known as Career Enhancement Training) assists IMGs to understand the organizational structure of the Canadian healthcare system and the essential skills and knowledge required to function as a

physician within that system. This training is highly recommended for those applying for residency through CaRMS (Practice Readiness Assessment or ACSAP) as it provides details on the CaRMS application process including CanMEDS, CVs, Personal Statements, and residency interviews.

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT CERTIFICATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (BLS)

The Basic Life Support Certification for Health Professionals (BLS) is a mandatory certification for all who work in the Alberta healthcare system. It is based on the Heart and Stroke Foundation curriculum used for the training of health care providers. BLS is delivered by certified instructors. Participants receive a certificate after successful completion of the exam at the end of the session.

CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Career Transition Program (CTP) assists IMGs who are considering an alternative pathway into the Canadian healthcare system as a short or long-term career goal. The program aims to increase IMGs' overall knowledge and awareness of alternative career pathways through a series of employment related workshops, mentoring events, mentorship circles, one-on-one coaching sessions, and an observership opportunity. This program has been made possible with funds from Governments of Canada and Alberta.

MCAP ONLINE PLUS

MCAP Online Plus is an engaging blended course offering both online and face-to-face components. This course is aimed at preparing physicians for successful integration into the Canadian healthcare system. An emphasis will be placed on communication, critical reasoning, and the attitude and skills required for a patient-centred, collaborative-care model. Face-to-face sessions are facilitated by practicing physicians and a medical communication educator. Face-to-face sessions include practice cases with standardized patients and feedback. This program is geared towards those going into practice via CaRMS or the Practice Readiness Assessment (PRA) route.

JOURNAL CLUB

AIMGA is pleased to host a journal club for members who have completed their LMCC examinations and wish to maintain their clinical knowledge and skills through a weekly meeting with fellow members. The purpose of the journal club is to discuss articles in the current medical literature while providing opportunities for training in clinical decision making and for teaching/learning research methodology, clinical epidemiology and statistics. The club is also an excellent opportunity for an exchange of insights regarding clinical problems. This program includes monthly lectures on the basics of research delivered by a faculty member from the University of Calgary.

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

AIMGA offers a variety of lectures and workshops throughout the year based on the needs of IMGs. For example, clinical workshops to support study groups, workshops to support those applying for CaRMS, workshops to support those selected for residency, and workshops related to research or professional development.

LUNCH & LEARN / NETWORKING SESSIONS

Lunch & Learn and Networking sessions are informal sessions for our members to network with one another and to learn about a topic of interest. For example sessions may be related to an upcoming program, a research study being conducted, a support service, a community based program, or an activity to facilitate discussion. These sessions are offered monthly.

“Start by doing what’s necessary, then what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

-Saint Francis

FEATURE ARTICLE

Job Market Integration of International Medical Graduates through Alternative Career Pathways

Globalization, “brain drain & brain gain”, and career challenges

With growing globalization, migration of highly qualified professionals is very common. This movement of highly skilled professionals, most often characterized as “brain gain”, equips the destination or host countries with the skills, experience, and expertise of the immigrants. On the other hand, this movement represents the “brain drain” for the countries of origin that lose local, educated, skilled workers. The host countries, which are generally the developed countries of the world, create immigration policies to attract more and more skilled applicants based on their country's internal needs. Though this migration can benefit immigrants through providing social security or safer lives, proper integration into a career that reflects their skillsets or qualifications proves to be a challenge. The challenges related to appropriate skill-level integration are becoming more and more relevant across the world. This is especially true for medical professionals who have migrated to developed countries from developing countries. Professionals within this category are particularly vulnerable within the host country's labour market, as they face several barriers when they attempt to re-enter their occupation. The success rate for their entry into professional medical practice has been reported to be quite low.

What is Job Market Integration?

In recent years, the integration of immigrants has been high on the policy agenda in many countries, and Canada is certainly no exception. Job market integration is a very crucial component of the overall immigrant integration as appropriate job market integration contributes towards the empowerment of immigrants which leads to effective integration. Job market integration can be defined through various measures, including labour market participation and employment rates, earnings, employment commensurate with experience and qualifications, job advancement, and employment satisfaction. Job or labour market integration is arguably the single most determining factor contributing to the integration of immigrants, in whatever way this term is defined. The inclusion of migrants in the job market is key to ensure their effective integration into the host societies and their positive impact on the economy. This entails using fully their skills and realizing their economic as well as societal potential.

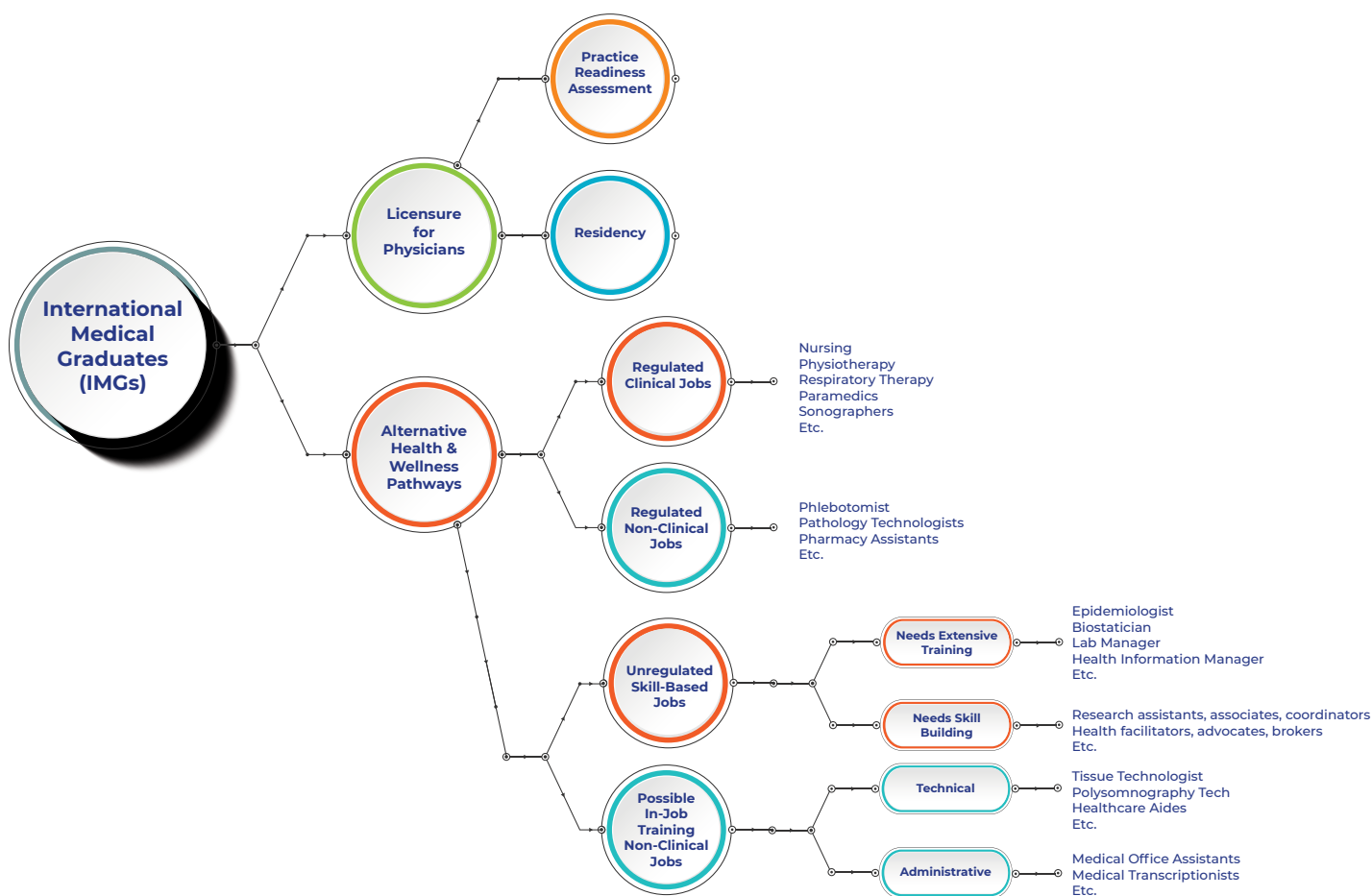
IMGs and job market integration as medical professionals

Internationally trained physicians, also known as

International Medical Graduates (IMG) or Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG), are physicians who have graduated from a medical school outside of the country they are seeking to practice. IMGs are also among those who have been migrating to Canada, especially in large numbers in recent decades. Regarding the skills they possess, they are a very distinct group of high-skilled immigrants whose skills are very specific and most of the time non-transferable immediately towards any other profession or career. Unfortunately, only a handful of these professionals integrate into the Canadian labour market as a physician, after completing all the required licensing examinations. Others need to choose jobs or career pathways that do not match their previous education and training. This happening also causes them to suffer socially, economically and mentally. Once arriving in a host country like Canada, IMGs who want to pursue clinical practice need to go through the licensing process through completing prescribed exams, obtaining required communication proficiency levels, and finally competing for residency training seats. Competition is high (e.g., in Alberta, there are approximately 250 eligible applicants per year for the 38 to 40 positions made available to IMGs). In recent years, residency-training opportunities for IMGs have begun to decline across Canada. It's also becoming evident that those who have been out of practice for five or more years or who may not have done very well on their exams are not deemed competitive candidates for the residency training opportunities. While seats are declining, the applicant pool is growing, contributing to a bottleneck situation.

Prospects of alternative careers for IMGs

This competitiveness of getting into residency to practice independently will forcibly leave a huge portion of immigrant IMGs to seek other career opportunities in a different field. Though the job market integration of IMGs through alternative career options has not been systematically explored, there are few initiatives undertaken by organizations like Alberta International Medical Graduate Association (AIMGA) to look into this aspect of career transition and come up with ways to facilitate their members' economic integration. Understanding the layout of the career pathways in a systematic way might facilitate the decision-making process about their future career choices and become helpful in skill development towards successful transition. The following diagram provides an outline of the career pathways that incorporates the consideration of the knowledge, training, and skillsets IMGs possess.



A taxonomy of alternative career pathways suitable for prevailing skillsets of IMGs

As shown in the schema, apart from the physician stream, the job or career choices can be categorized based on the need for training. These options can be further categorized based on the extent of training needed, especially in regards to the need for training leading to certification. Some jobs are regulated in Canada; as such, require licensing and/or certification to enter into the relevant career. It may take a long time and strenuous efforts to get a license, particularly when the job seekers are trained outside of Canada. Nonetheless, work in a non-regulated job related to the experience and qualification of the person is a possible alternative option. For instance, a trained health professional can work as a health policy analyst, public health inspector, health educator or medical laboratory technician with some sort of training. This can be a good way to use their skills and get Canadian health-related job market experience. IMGs can also plan to develop skills related to research assistantship that will lead towards jobs in the domain of health and wellness research.

The opportunities and the challenges

Despite the bottleneck situation for IMGs attempting to get into the physician stream in Canada, we believe that there are untapped opportunities for IMGs to

utilize their knowledge and skills in alternative career pathways. Recently, the creation of alternative pathways for IMGs' labor market integration has been gaining momentum. This, in turn, will increase the economic and societal integration of IMGs. Still there is much work that needs to be done; especially, the exploration of needed skill development which is very important. Once the different skillsets for improved job market competitiveness are systematically recognized, we will then be able to create awareness and provide recommendations. Next, appropriate bridging programs and training opportunities through practicum placements will be essential. Also, the perceptions of the IMGs also need to be captured through meaningful community engagement where they can play an active role in solution identification and implementation. Engagement with the possible employers will also be a positive step, as this will guide the steps to integration from the employers' perspectives. Academics, support providers, industry stakeholders, and policy makers need to be engaged in this work so that uptake and impact can be ensured.

Authors: Dr. Nashit Chowdhury (Immigrant and Refugee Health Interest Group, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada); Ms. Deidre Lake (Alberta International Medical Graduate Association, Canada); Dr. Turin Tanvir Chowdhury (Immigrant and Refugee Health Interest Group, Department of Family Medicine, Department of Community Health Sciences, O'Brien Institute for Public Health, The Libin Cardiovascular Institute of Alberta, Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada)

MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

**Bettina
Wagner**

A big shout out to Deidre for organising the Career Transition Program. Her guidance on how to best write a biography, which allowed me to stand apart from other candidates, was instrumental in me being successful and gaining employment as a Clinical Assistant with AHS. It is fantastic to feel like a valuable part of a medical team again. THANK YOU!!!!

**Toyin
Shonubi**

AIMGA has been a reliable resource center for IMGs and I am glad I am part of the organization. In fact, I am glad that I decided to settle in Alberta, else I could have missed the opportunity of joining this great organization. I have benefited immensely from the various programs such as the CTP, the NAC OSCE study group, and the CaRMS Preparation Program which have broadened my horizons and contributed to my success in my journey to becoming licensed. I am not there yet but I believe AIMGA is and will continue to be a good resource for a successful career in Medicine.

**Babitha
Thayaril**

AIMGA has been playing a significant role in evolving me into who I am today. While the study groups at AIMGA have helped me to become a Licentiate with the Medical Council of Canada, the new Career Transition Program helped me to dissect my skills. I work part-time as a Clinical Aide for a Family Physician. Myself being an App Developer, I contribute my expertise to a Canadian Healthcare Startup - *Sharesmart App*. Also, as a Community Ambassador for the Canadian Cancer Society, the Calgary community benefits from my healthcare advocacy skills. I can vouch that these leadership contributions would have been impossible for me without AIMGA.

**Mehreen
Rana**

I am very thankful to the staff at the Calgary office of AIMGA; they are so helpful in every way. I joined AIMGA in January 2019 and took part in the various study groups and courses. It is through these that I am able to apply for the CaRMS Residency Matching this year because I passed all my exams. I am grateful to Deidre and Rossalia for providing me with the opportunity to be the part of the best resource available to IMGs in their quest for integrating into the Canadian healthcare system.

**Chimdindu
Ogbuka**

I was a confused permanent resident upon landing to Canada last year, but through AIMGA, I got re-directed and hugely supported to pursue my dreams of practising here. So far, I have passed all the required exams and I couldn't have done it without AIMGA. I will ever remain grateful and hope to give back as much as I have been given to help others succeed as well.

**Osas
Attamah**

I am awed and amazed at how welcoming and inclusive AIMGA has been, readily available to help, advise and direct, full of valuable information to assist IMGs in finding a path. Thank you, AIMGA.

**Yuliet
Perez
Santos**

The Edmonton AIMGA are very friendly and helpful. I really love the way all the staff support and encourage me to keep going in the licensure process.

SPECIAL THANKS

EVENT VENUE



**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**

Downtown Campus

PHOTOBOOTH



Twisted
PHOTOBOOTHS

Fun in a Photo!

GIFT DONATIONS

- RnR Wellness Spa
- Vertigo Theatre
- Theatre Calgary

RAFFLE DRAW PRIZES

- \$100 Visa gift card
- \$75 Visa gift card
- \$50 Visa gift card
- \$25 Visa gift card

ENTERTAINMENT:

Ahmed Hodelin & Ingrid Diaz

CATERING BY GREAT EVENTS

**LOCOS
FOR
HAVANA**

DANCE STUDIO



GREAT EVENTS
CATERING

AIMGA IS FUNDED BY:



Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada



AIMGA



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Crescent Centre
Suite 202
1409 Edmonton Trail NE
Calgary, AB T2E 3K8



403.520.7730

AIMGA EDMONTON



Stratica Medical Building
Suite 300
10140 117 Street NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 1X3



587.524.2750



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