

PRESENT SCENARIO AFFECTING F.M.G.'s

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Dear Fellow FMG & Friends:

Whatever you think or know, please read and assimilate the entire substance of this letter.

As you are fully aware, the economic and professional existence of all Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG's) in the U.S.A. is threatened to say the least. You and I may not be able to practice medicine in this country before long; this is the very reason why I write our analysis of what appears to be the cause and possible solution to the predicament and future of FMG's in the U.S.

The practice of medicine in this country, is among other things dictated by the law of supply & demand. American organized medicine claims that there is an "oversupply" of physicians in this country. This would have been good for the consumers (patients), because this would have resulted in lower costs (fees) and availability and easy access to desired services particularly in less desirable & indigent areas. However, this is bad for the self or rather selfish interests of physicians because this would cause lower incomes and less luxuries in life. Furthermore, the medical school professors can no longer justify the need for government subsidies, foundation aid money from the private sector, etc., thus reducing the amount of dollars available for personal salaries and needs.

The solution therefore to this problem is to reduce the number of physicians. However, which physicians should be eliminated? In the name of good patient care protection, the incompetent doctors were eliminated; but there are only very few of these. There is however a very vulnerable, law-abiding, silent, un-organized, non-belligerent group of physicians that comprise about 20-25% of the entire physician manpower of this country. This group is made up of Foreign Medical Graduates (FMG's).

The "well oiled" & "well maintained" machine of American organized medicine has to work. The five parent & supporting organizations of this great "machine" are: The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), The American Medical Association (AMA), The Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS), The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), and The American Hospital Association (AHA). The hierarchy, Board of Trustees, officers, governing bodies, and members of the House of Delegates of these organizations are graduates of U.S. Medical Schools (USMG's). The large majority of the members of hospital committees (credentials, peer review, etc.), and medical staff officers are USMG's. The same majority is held by committees & policy making bodies of State, County, & City medical societies. Furthermore, the Board of Medical Examiners & the Commission on Medical Discipline are composed of USMG's.

Now we can see that through the hierarchy of the AAMC (composed of U.S. medical school deans) and that of the AMA (composed of USMG's), policies and decision making processes are influenced at all levels. The members of the House of Delegates of the AMA, State & specialty societies, etc. may find it difficult to refuse the advice, suggestion, or even the whisper of their own medical school deans. The medical advisers of most Senators and Congressmen are USMG's and may be beholden to their own special interests and the interests of the USMG's. The influence therefore is farreaching, fathomless, and pervasive.

We have said that the solution to this "oversupply" of physicians is the elimination of FMG's (about 150,000 weak), from the ranks of U.S. physicians. (I could not help but think of Hitler & his solution to a problem). The mechanism to achieve this has started some years ago, is very well-orchestrated, and is accelerating at a very rapid pace.

- I. Public Law 94-484 enforced by the U.S. Immigration Service prevented FMG's from coming to the United States. This public law has been thought to have been brought about by the Council on Medical Affairs (CMFA) through a document known as "Physician Manpower & Distribution: The Role of Foreign Medical Graduates."
- II. The licensure and entry into the medical practice of medicine of new FMG's has been curtailed if not prevented by 1982 AMA Resolution 56 which indicated to State licensing boards that only graduates of accredited medical schools (USMG's) may be considered for licensing examination. An added requirement of having prior accredited residency increased the difficulty in obtaining a license.
- III. Bills are proposed in the Senate & House of Representatives that prevent FMG's from acquiring internship or residency (Graduate Medical Education = GME) positions in the U.S. Examples of these Bills are: S1158, S1210, H.R. 3486, etc.
H.R. 3485 is a Bill introduced by Mr. Claude Pepper of Florida: "To provide for the accreditation of courses of study at foreign medical schools and to prohibit payment under Federal law for physician's services furnished by physicians who are graduates of unaccredited course of study". . . **This means all FMG's.** If this Bill (HR3485) passes and becomes law, we can be sure that other insurances particularly BC/BS will follow.
- IV. The final stroke against FMG's which may lead to their complete elimination from the ranks of U.S. practicing physicians will be achieved by: (1) Re-examination for the purpose of re-certification or re-licensure and (2) The use of quasi-legal and extra-judicial bodies such as hospital boards, peer-review boards, credentials committee, advisory committees, etc., etc. which may terminate hospital privileges if (1) is not met, or if a quota as to the percentage of FMG's in the hospital staff is set . . . 0-20%?

FMG's are targets to be eliminated from the ranks of U.S. physicians because we are at par and can compete against USMG's but we are known to be vulnerable because we are usually silent, law-abiding, non-belligerent, and not organized; we are known to be fragmented by different ethnic associations and further fragmented by different ethnic specialty societies. We do not have a strong national organization to speak for us; we don't have lobbyists; and we don't have cohesiveness or unity of purpose.

We FMG's have tremendous financial resources and intellectual abilities and have adopted a comfortable to luxurious standard of living but we have allowed our God given gift and economic source . . . our professions to be threatened and placed at jeopardy. We have made no provisions to defend this. We spent millions in luxuries but pennies for defense. If we stop and think for a moment, there are about 150,000 FMG's in the U.S. and this can be a very strong constituency to contend with. Other professionals such as Podiatrists, Dentists, Optometrists, Nurse Anesthetists, Midwives, etc., etc., have their advocacy felt in the national & local legislatures, but not the FMG's.

The question at this time is: what can FMG's do? We have three choices:

1. Do nothing different. Continue the way we are and enjoy our short-lived luxuries & economic stability and hope for brighter days.
2. Continue and even increase our financial support to AMA and hope that their membership (USMG's) will be kind to us. Try very hard to be officers and members of the House of Delegates of the AMA & the State, County, and specialty societies, and hospital staffs & committees, and hope that we can change their anti-FMG policies.
3. Organize & unite, and make the FMG constituency be heard by the law makers in the Senate, Congress, and local governments, and by the public. We don't have to be belligerent, we don't have to break laws, and we don't have to use force. We can be heard through proper representation and lobbying and through the power of the pen. The actual dollar cost to any FMG would be negligible as compared to the possible economic loss if things do happen.

Join or support a national organization whose main purpose is to prevent discrimination or elimination of FMG's. We have formed the Society for the Prevention of Discrimination against Foreign Medical Graduates (SPD FMG). It is an organization of no particular ethnic group but of all ethnic groups. Our membership & ranks are not limited to FMG's. Everyone who desire to be members or supporters of the anti-FMG discrimination cause may join or help.

You may already be a member of ACIP (American College of International Physicians); if you are, we urge you to join & support us too; if you are not, then maybe you can join both organizations. We need all the help we can get. Time is running out on us. I just hope we can still reverse the tide; if we don't do anything, the inevitable will happen. We can at least let the public know that the FMG's who helped this country meet it's medical needs were made the "sacrificial lambs" offered by the AAMC & AMA to correct the "over-supply" of physicians so that the USMG's may continue to enjoy high incomes and luxurious living and the consumers (patients) may continue to pay still higher fees.

My fellow FMG's & friends, let no heart be faint, let us all work together with a unity of purpose, and hope for a righteous victory.

Enclosed is a letter that you can photocopy and distribute to your colleagues, relatives, friends, and even patients. They in turn can address, sign, and send this letter to their respective Senators, Congressmen, State & County legislators, and the U.S. President.

Please photocopy the introductory letter with the application form and the letter to the legislators and send them to 10 FMG's of your choice; they in turn can each send the same to 10 FMG's of their choice and so on. Hopefully, with this method, we can reach a good majority of the FMG's nationwide ASAP.

Don't forget to fill out the application to SPD FMG.

Thank you. I remain.

Very truly yours,

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