

UTMS Statement on H-1B Visa Sponsorship for Residents and Fellows in Graduate Medical Education Residency Training Programs

Effective immediately, The University of Texas Medical School at Houston and The University of Texas System Medical Foundation (Foundation) will adopt a policy of selecting and accepting into its graduate medical education residency training programs only those international medical graduates who are under J-1 visas sponsored by the Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). This position is in line with many other medical schools as well as the Association of American Medical Colleges, which endorses the use of the J-1 visa process for foreign physicians entering graduate medical education training programs.

The H-1B visa is intended for temporary workers with exceptional abilities in the specialty professions and is inappropriate mechanism for graduate medical education training. Medical graduates that enter under this visa do not meet the educational objectives established by the ECFMG.

The J-1 visa is recognized as the appropriate mechanism to cover foreign medical graduates interested in the exchange of knowledge and skills in education.

Residents and fellows that are currently on the Foundation payroll that are in H-1B status, or any resident/fellow that is in a pending status for an H-1B visa with UTMSH and the Foundation, may proceed forward in such status only under the following condition: should the prevailing wage, as determined by the Texas Workforce Commission, for the resident/fellow be higher than the actual stipend paid by the Foundation for the respective PGY level for that resident/fellow, then that resident/fellow shall be required to convert to a J-1 visa in order to remain in the training program.

In accordance with the federal mandate that 100% of prevailing wage must be paid to all H-1Bs and his/her peers, as well as the intent of the H-1B sponsorship (as indicated above), effective immediately, UTMSH and the Foundation will cease to sponsor H-1Bs for new Residents/Fellows who transfer to UTMSH including those who are currently on H-1Bs at another institution.

Consequently, Program Directors should advise the residents/fellows in their programs that currently hold H-1B visas, any new and/or transferring applicants as well as any potential applicants that have expressed an interest in a UTMSH residency/fellowship program, of this policy.