



# Ethical Integration of Internationally Educated Health Professionals: Ethical and Regulatory Contexts

## Report from the United States

Marta van Zanten, John R. Boulet and John J. Norcini  
Foundation for Advancement of International Medical  
Education and Research

IHWC  
Brisbane, Australia  
October 2011

FAIMER®

# Overview of Presentation



Pathways for entry for internationally educated physicians, nurses and pharmacists

- Challenges associated with entry

Summary data on numbers attempting qualification and practicing

Recent trends

Description of programs designed to assist with ethical integration of health care professionals



# Physicians Pathway for Entry

Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECMFG) certification

- Required for all international medical graduates (IMGs) prior to seeking graduate medical education (GME) positions and subsequent licensure
- Medical school listed in the International Medical Education Directory (IMED)
- Primary source verification of medical diploma
- Passing United States Medical Licensing Examinations (USMLE) step 1, step 2 clinical knowledge (CK), and step 2 clinical skills (CS)
  - Same exam requirements as domestic graduates



# Physicians

## Challenges Associated with Entry

No special pathways to circumvent or fast-track the ECFMG certification or GME requirement

Certification process is costly

USMLE exams are challenging

- Require advanced English skills
- Must travel to the US to take step 2 CS

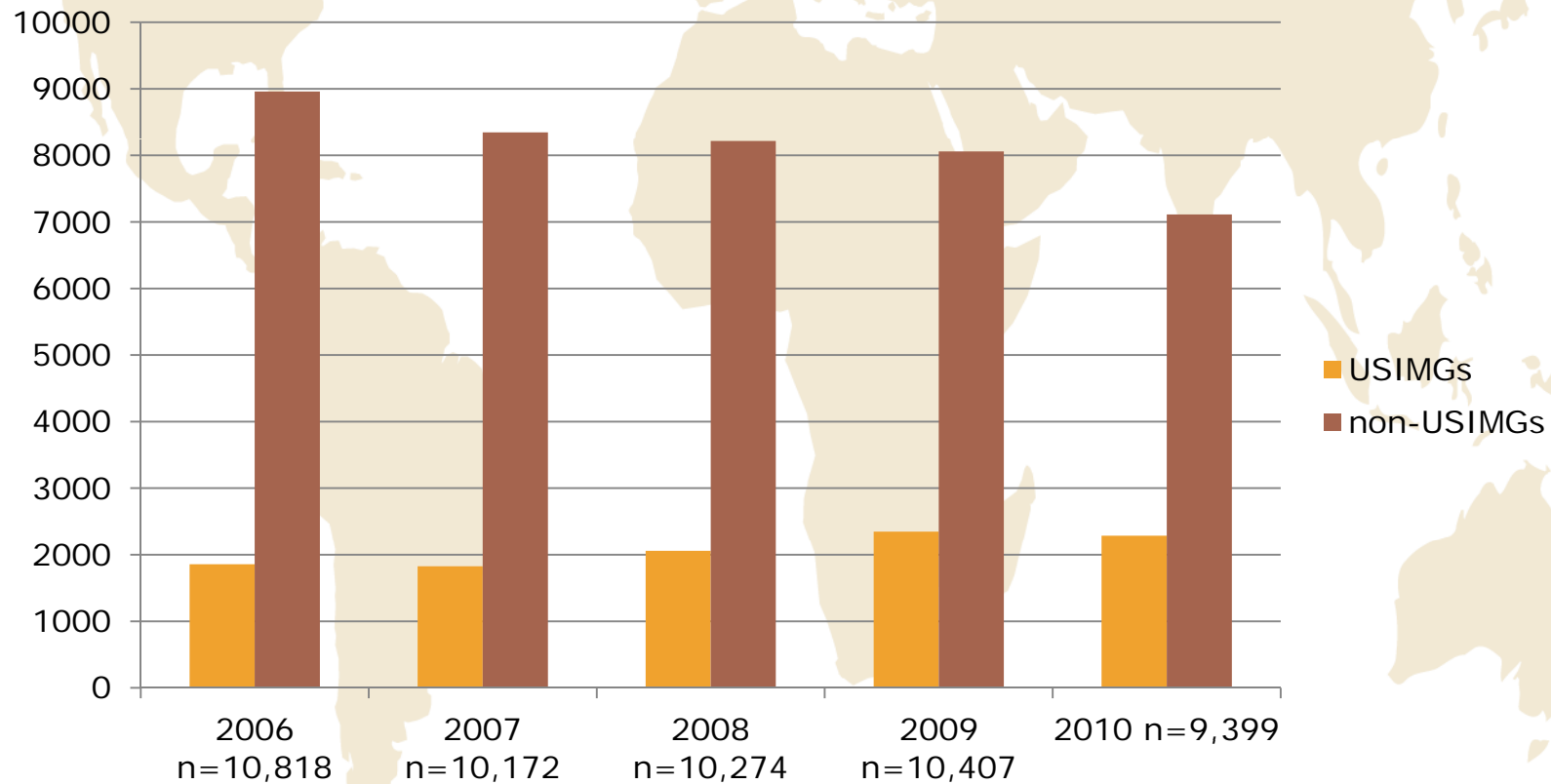
ECFMG certification does not guarantee a GME position

- Approximately half of ECFMG certified physicians do not enter GME in the United States

After GME, additional licensure requirements

# Summary Data of ECFMG Certified Physicians

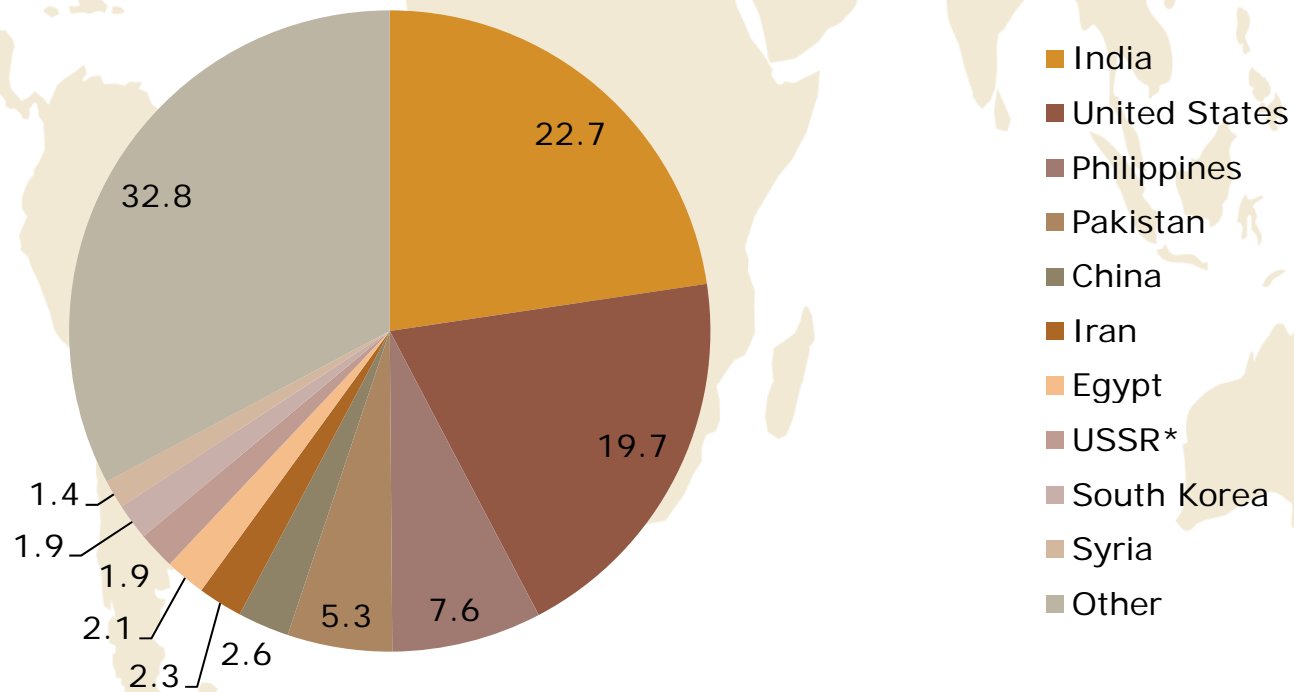
Numbers of IMGs certified by ECFMG for the years 2006 – 2010, stratified by USIMGs versus non-USIMGs



# Summary Data Practicing IMG Physicians

In 2010, 23.5% (of about 700,000) practicing physicians in direct patient care are IMGs

Citizenship (at medical school) percentages of IMGs





# Nurses

Internationally educated nurses (IENs) must be certified by the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS)

- Credential verification
- Qualifying exam
- English exam

In 2008-2009, CGFNS issued 3,300 certificates

Pass National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN)

Data on practicing IENs: 3.5% (2007)

- Underestimate



# Pharmacists

Internationally educated pharmacists must be certified by the Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Examination Committee (FPGEC)

- Credential verification
- Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Equivalency Examination (FPGEE)
- English exam

Additional licensure exams and requirements vary by state

In 2008, 3,045 applicants took the FPGEE



# Ethical Integration of Internationally Educated Health Professionals



## ECFMG Acculturation Program

- Resources for individual IMGs and GME programs
- IMG Advisors Network
- Interactive modules on US healthcare system, survival guides, etc.
- All ECFMG acculturation resources are free and available on the ECFMG website

Numerous other acculturation programs in use for nurses and other health care professionals

Research needed on effectiveness of programs



# Discussion / Conclusions

US will continue to rely on internationally educated health care professionals

Internationally educated health care professionals will continue to be attracted to the US

Increase in US domestic production and changing roles (i.e., nurse practitioners, physician assistants) will decrease need for internationally educated physicians

Need for better metrics on migration

- Production of health care workers
- Domestic needs
- Is production focused on local needs?