

## The Road to Anesthesiology Residency: Lessons Learned from Program Signaling

The specialty of anesthesiology has seen an incredible demand over the past few years. According to the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) Results and Data report for 2023, 2,040 candidates matched. Of those PGY-1 residency spots available, over 99% were filled overall<sup>1</sup>. With increasing interest comes increasing competitiveness and an expansion in application congestion for residency programs. In order to create a more equitable and transparent system, program signaling – a system that allows participants to indicate interest in a limited number of residency programs and geographic preferences began as a voluntary process to benefit both the applicant and the residency program with the continued virtual residency interview process.

Communication between medical schools, dean's offices, anesthesiology advisors, residency programs, and applicants is thought to be more crucial than ever to ensure transparency between these entities. We sought to identify how medical students, recently matched anesthesiology residents, and program directors advise students on how to utilize signaling, while also exploring how programs employ signaling throughout the journey of creating their own residency classes.

If we can improve communication between advising entities and residency applicants and transparency between applicants and programs, then applicants may be better served to make informed decisions about how/why to signal programs. Anesthesiology programs will then, in turn, interview and recruit the most interested and qualified applicants, diversifying matched residency classes.

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<sup>1</sup> National Resident Matching Program, Results and Data: 2023 Main Residency Match®. National Resident Matching Program, Washington, DC. 2023. <https://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-Main-Match-Results-and-Data-Book-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed September 10, 2023.

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### MEDICAL STUDENTS

#### PREPARING FOR RESIDENCY APPLICATIONS

Medical students utilized the **medical school dean's office**, and **anesthesiology advisors** for application advisement/use of signals. They plan to signal based on **fit/future success, interest**, increasing the **likelihood of obtaining an interview**, and **probability of matching**. Other resources used by medical students include **faculty opinions, program websites, NRMP/AAMC**.



### RESIDENCY PROGRAM DIRECTORS

#### ADVICE FROM PROGRAM LEADERSHIP

PD and APDs suggested the use of signals based on **program interest, sense of fit/future success**, and the **potential to match**. They believe signaling increases the **likelihood of interviewing**, likely to **rank higher**, and is easier to **screen/offer interviews to non-standard geographical regions**. They are committed to showcasing DEI efforts by **additional programming, group sessions, funding for travel/outreach**, and **potential 2nd look events**.



### MATCHED RESIDENTS

#### STARTING YOUR ANESTHESIOLOGY CAREER

Currently matched residents signaled based on **program interest** and **likelihood of matching at that program**. They received application advice from the **medical school dean's office, program directors**, and **faculty**. The most useful additional information was **program socials, resident meet & greets, electronic/printed materials**, and **personalized** follow up emails.

