



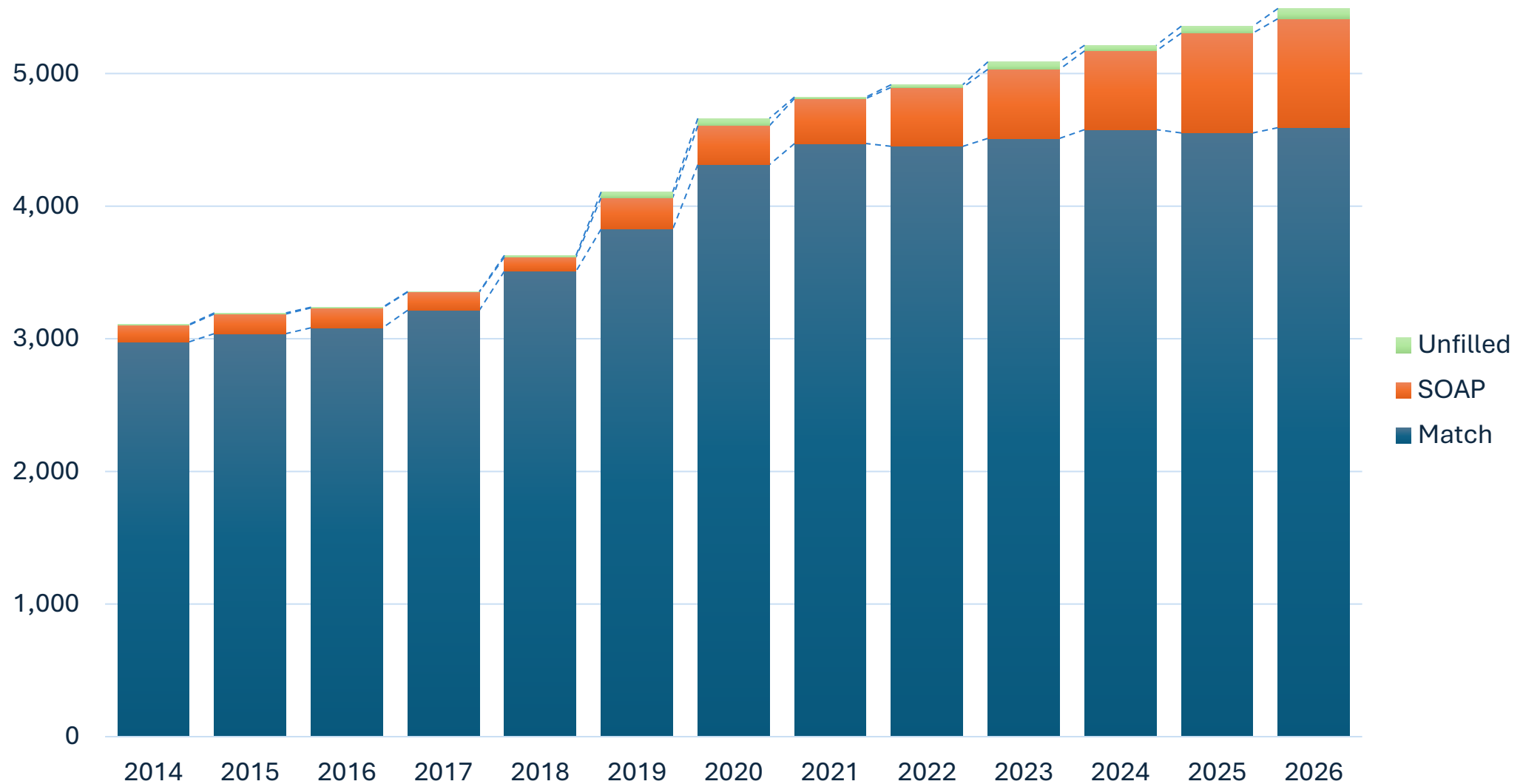
Residency Selection Improvement Initiative

ADFM Hot Topic
August 26, 2026

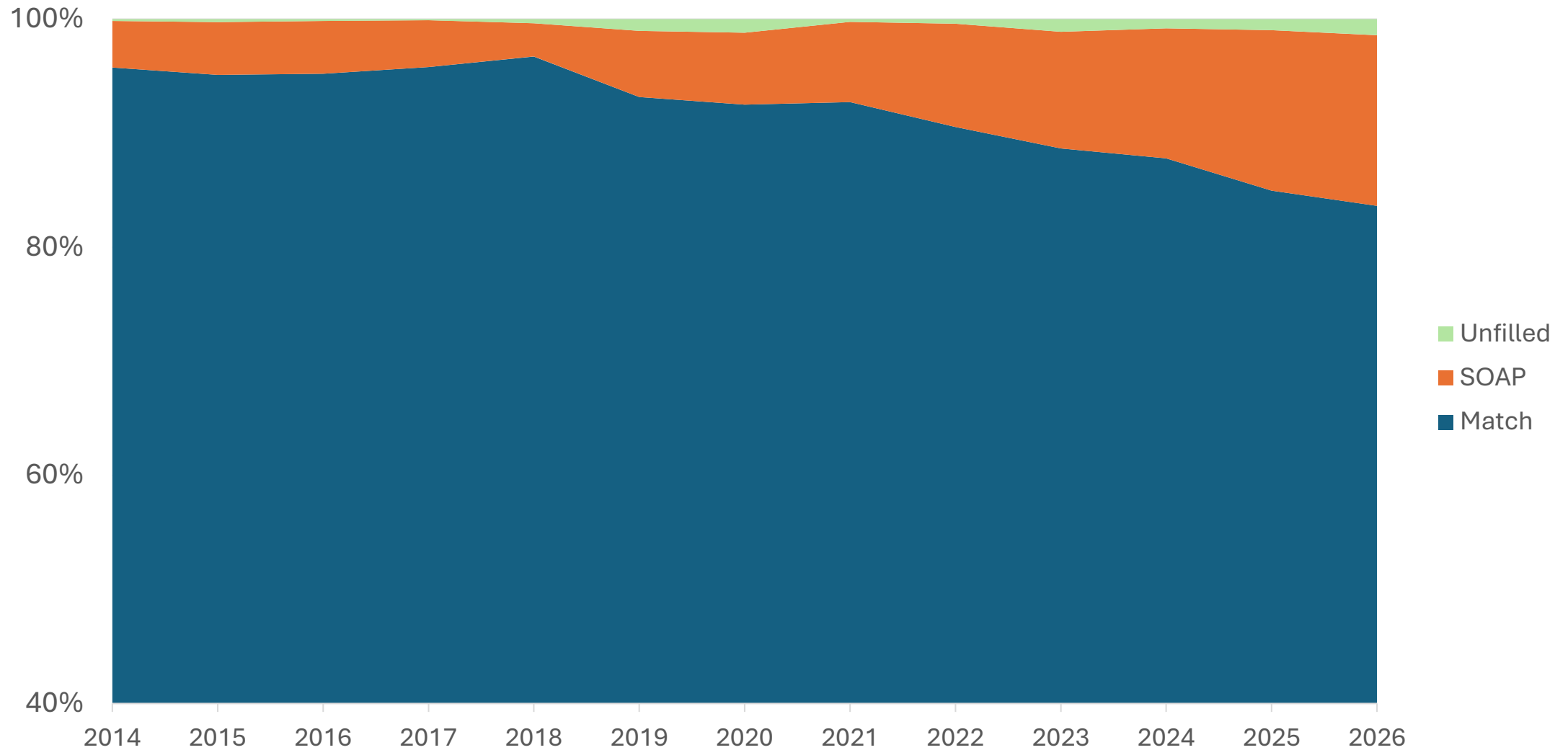
Karen Mitchell, MD, FAAFP

Vice President For National Residency and Academic
Partnerships, AAFP

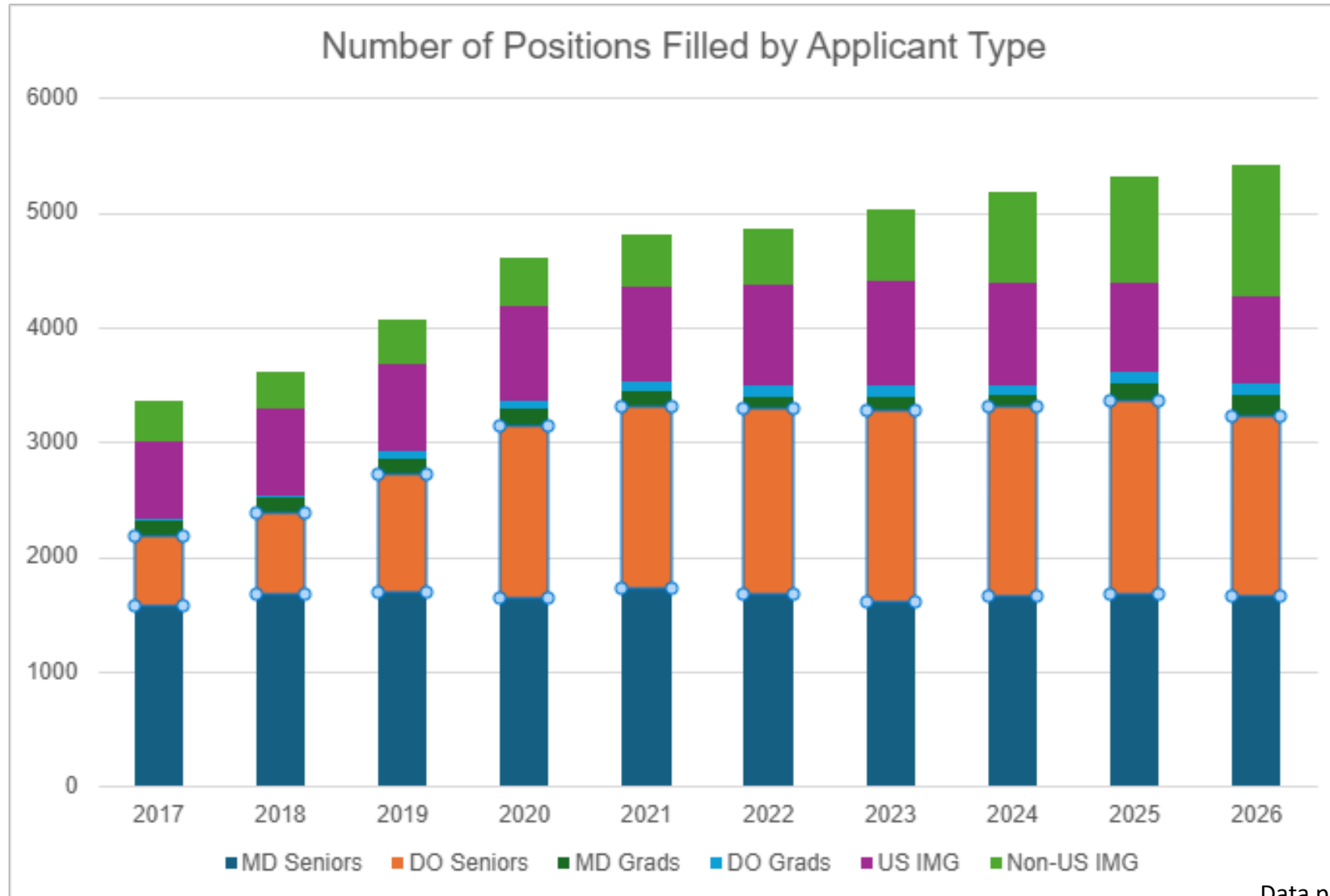
Number of Positions Filled, by Year



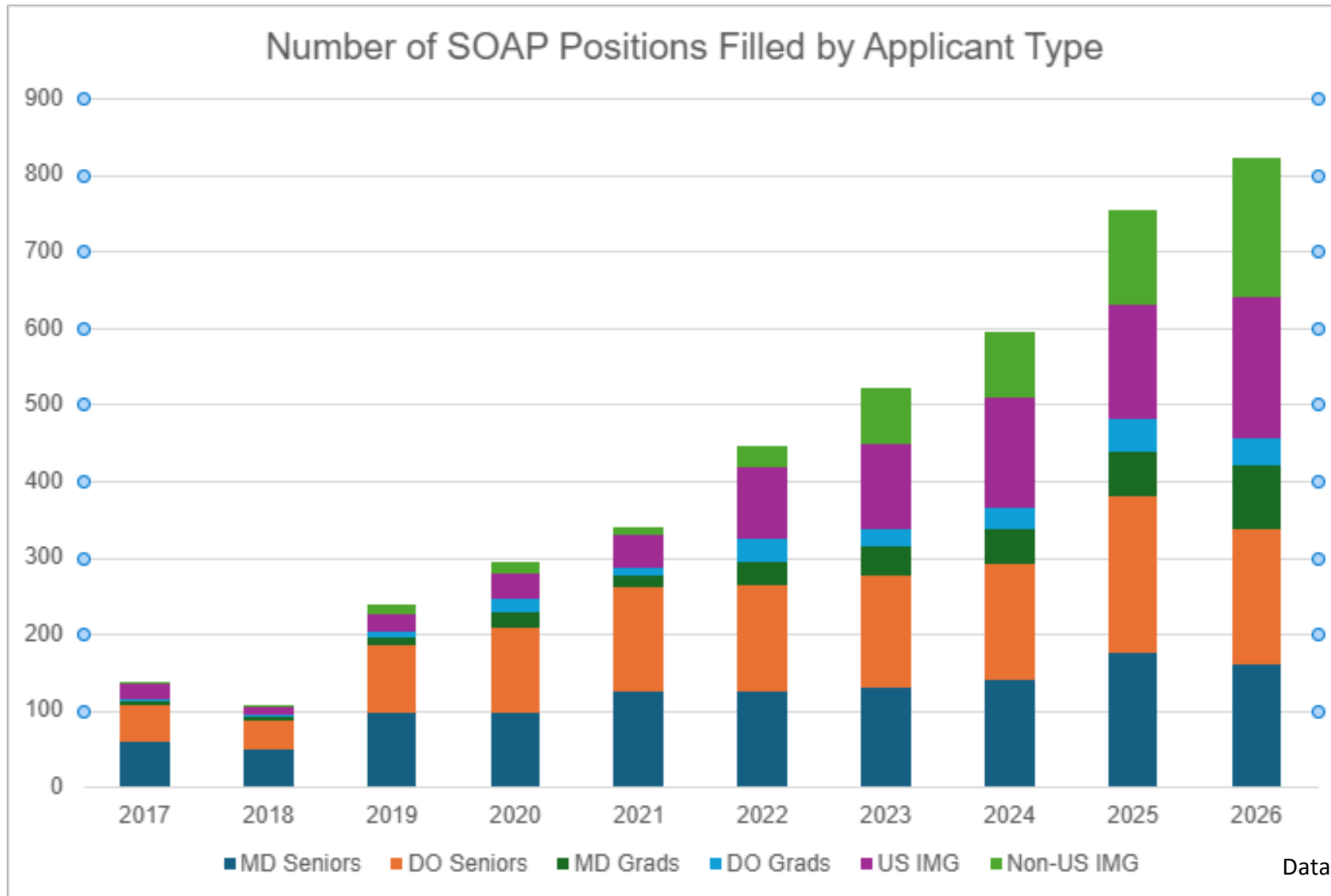
Percent of Positions Filled, by Year



Total Positions Filled by Applicant Type



SOAP Positions Filled by Applicant Type

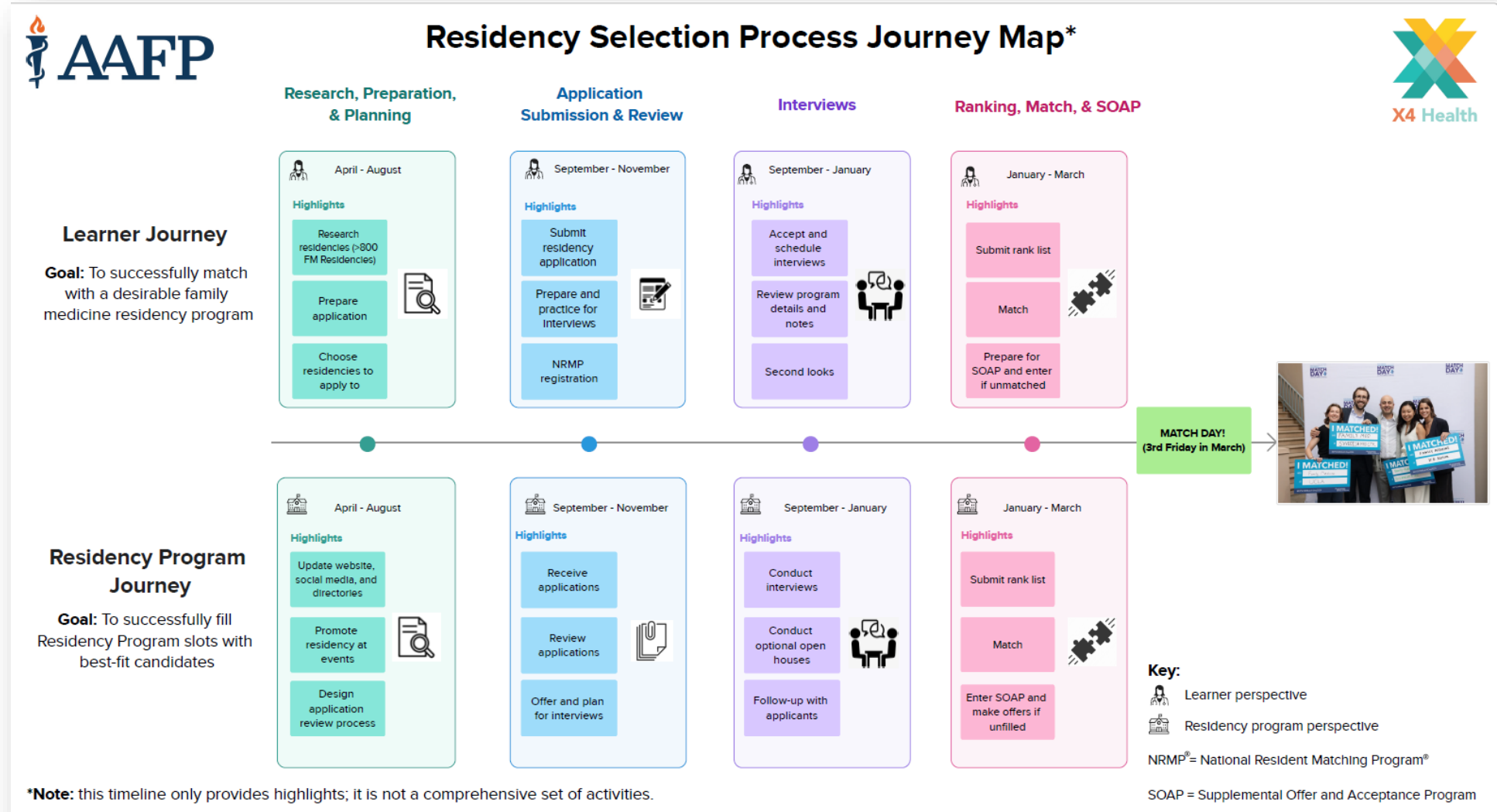


Data provided courtesy of the NRMP. 5

Goal: Fill all family medicine residency positions in the most effective, efficient and economical way possible

- Help residency applicants find family medicine programs that align with their values and interests
- Help residency programs find the best possible applicants for their program

Focus on Residency Selection Process



Important factors

- Broader factors influencing students' specialty choice.
- Pathways to medical school (except as related to early residency commitment).
- Family physician practice and payment issues.

...being worked on by other initiatives and organizations, including other divisions of AAFP



AAFP convened stakeholders in August 2025 representing the entire residency selection and Match process to identify a focused number of impactful, rapid residency selection system changes over the next 1-2 years that will better serve family medicine.



Four Priority Areas

1. Create a Centralized Program Information Tool
2. Re-Imagine the Interview Process
3. Improve the Residency Selection and Match for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) and Multi-Specialty Applicants
4. Support Dedicated FM Applicants



#1. Create a Centralized Residency Information Tool

Priority 1: One-stop Information Tool

- **Goal:** Streamline the process of finding residency information for applicants and decrease the number of places residencies must report information.
- **Analysis:** Identified FM-specific data across major directories: Residency Explorer™, FRIEDA™, and AAFP Directory
- **Stakeholder Input:** Gathered input from applicants, residents, medical school advisors, program coordinators, and program directors
- **Prioritization:** Identified FM-specific information feasible for near-term inclusion (next Match cycle) and the longer-term implementation

New Residency Explorer™ 2026: Additional Specialty Data in Careers in Medicine

Inside the Specialty

Inside the Specialty features insights shared by specialty organizations to help you understand how physicians in this field practice, are compensated, and more.

Practice This section is powered by the [American Board of Family Medicine](#).

Practice Type

Compare how physicians in this specialty spend their time across different career stages.

	Early-Career Family Physicians (N=11,389)	Mid/Late-Career Family Physicians (N=74,844)
Outpatient Continuity Care	83.3%	78.6%
Hospitalist	8.1%	5.4%
Urgent Care	3.1%	5.3%
Emergency Medicine	1.9%	4.1%
Palliative Care	0.9%	0.8%
Sports Medicine	0.8%	0.8%
Other	1.9%	5.2%

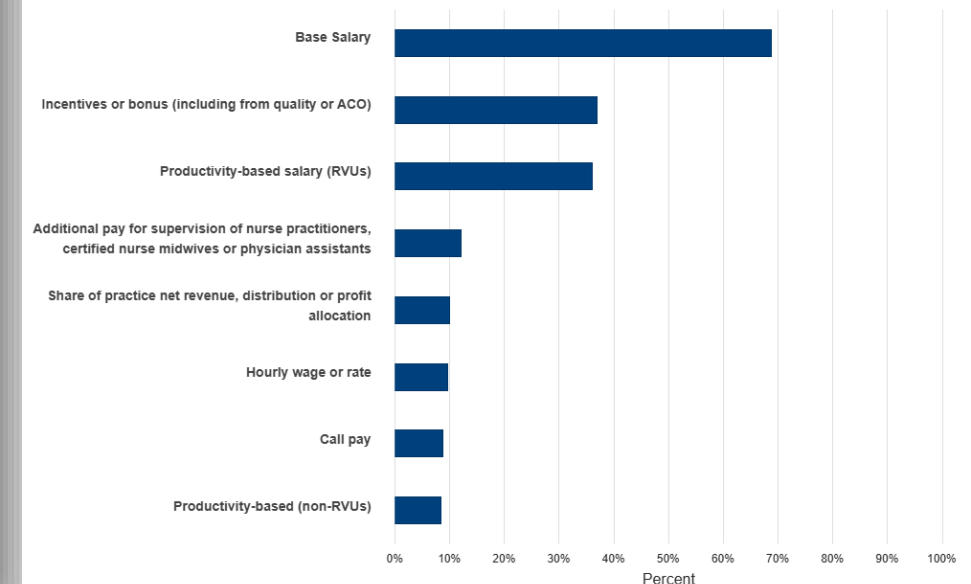
Compensation and Benefits This section is powered by the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#).

This section displays data collected by the 2025 Career Benchmark Dashboard Survey, which asked family physicians for information about their jobs in 2024.

Average 2024 Annual Income for Family Physicians:
\$298,225 (Base salary & Bonuses combined, N = 8,408)

Compensation Structure (N = 8,408)

Shows how family physicians are typically paid and how common each compensation type is.



New Residency Explorer™ 2026: Family Medicine Program Highlights

Example:

Program Highlights

Our program is a community based, university affiliated program that is set in urban Phoenix. We serve a diverse community of patients at our residency clinic, which is a Federally Qualified Health Center. The hospital we are affiliated with is the safety net hospital for the region. Our mission is to provide outstanding clinical training, to serve our community, and to graduate competent and compassionate primary care physicians to be leaders in the community.

The following information has been provided by [AAFP](#):

Program Strengths Health Equity Hospital Medicine Behavioral Medicine	Community Setting Urban	Clinic Funding Federal or other government clinic funding including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) or look-alike, Community Health Centers (CHC), Rural Health Clinic (RHC)	Pregnancy Care Training At least 20 deliveries for all residents; comprehensive pregnancy care is not available
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Source: Residency Explorer™

Next Steps

- Continue working on longer-term revisions
- Encourage programs to update profiles ([AAFP Residency Census](#) and GME Track Program Survey)
- Encourage applicants to utilize Residency Explorer™ tool and Careers in Medicine®



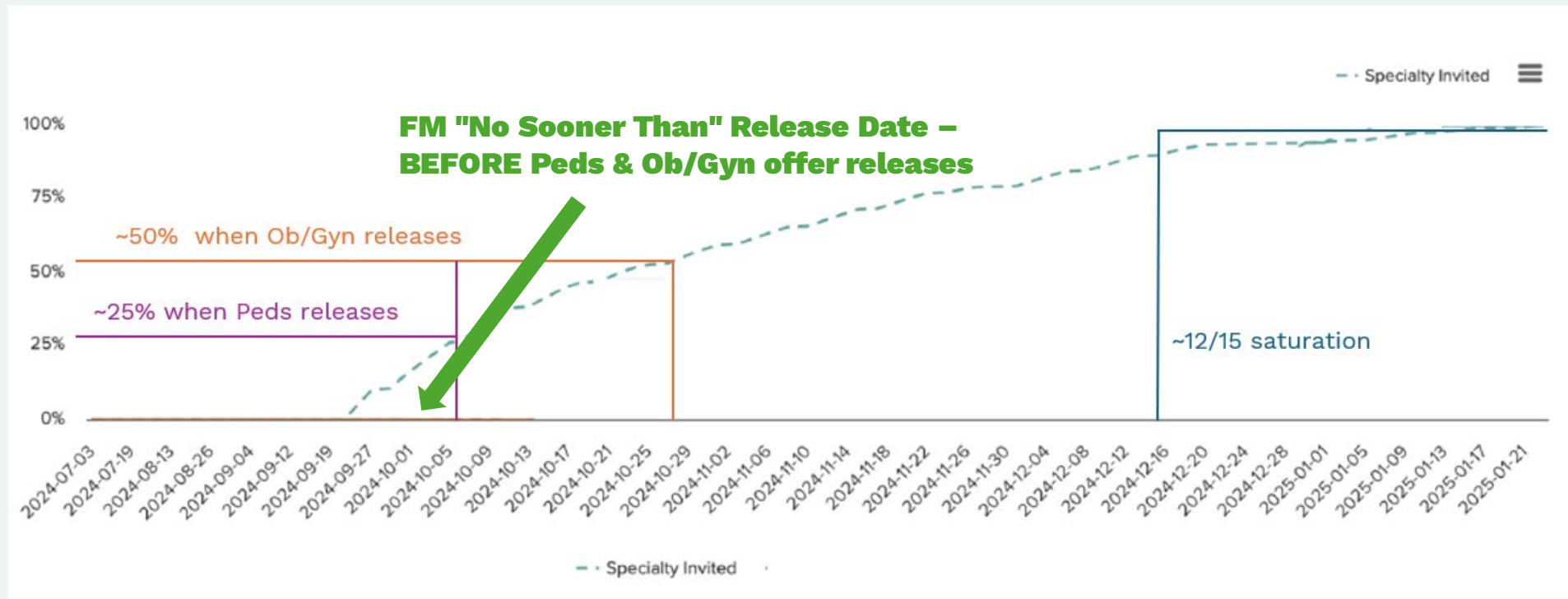
#2. Reimagine the Interview Process

Priority 2: Reimagine the Interview Process

- **Goal:** Streamline the interview process for applicants and programs
- **Data:** 72,000 interview invitations for 5,000 positions (~13 interview invitations per position offered)
- **Solutions Development:** Created a multi-stakeholder workgroup (applicants, residents, medical school advisors, designated institution officials, program coordinators, and program directors)
- **Assessment:** Identify ideas and recommended interview policies from other specialties that benefit FM

Slowing the process allows for mission-aligned review to occur without penalizing programs

FM interview invitations by date 2024-2025



Interview Guidelines for Family Medicine

01	Number of Interview Invitations	Programs offer only as many invitations as interview spots available. This is in accordance with the NRMP Match participation agreement.
02	Interview Offer Release	Programs release initial interview invitations no sooner than one week after applications are released to programs to allow for mission-aligned application review.
03	Applicant Response Time	Programs provide applicants at least 2 business days to accept or reject an interview invitation before releasing the spot to another applicant.
04	Applicant Withdrawal Notice	Applicants who plan to withdraw from an accepted interview should provide at least 2 weeks notice to the program.
05	Applicant Status Notice	Programs notify current applicants of their application status by December 1 st .
06	Virtual/In-person Interviews	Programs may host interviews that are virtual and/or in-person and should clearly specify the available options on their website and applicant materials.

Updated OPDA Guidelines for 2027

Can be viewed here:

<https://cmss.org/program-directors-association-guides-for-residency-applicants/> **or here:**

<https://www.afmrd.org/collaborative-projects/opda-pd-guide103>



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Program Directors Association Guides for Residency Applicants 2027

The Program Directors Association Guide for Residency Applicants is a joint effort between the Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and American Medical Association (AMA) to improve communication and provide program directors guidance on key specialty-specific application information and resources. Each guide includes information on letters of recommendation, away rotations, program signals, USMLE/COMLEX-USA scores, interview format, etc.

2027 OPDA PD Guide Spreadsheet – Summary of all specialty guides

The following program directors associations have provided OPDA with completed 2027 guides that include guidance on these key specialty application parameters for student deans and prospective applicants:

- Allergy and Immunology
- Anesthesiology
- Dermatology
- Diagnostic Radiology
- Emergency Medicine
- **Family Medicine**
- Internal Medicine
- Medical Genetics and Genomics (categorical)
- Medical Genetics and Genomics (combined)
- Neurology – Child
- Neurology – Adult

Next Steps

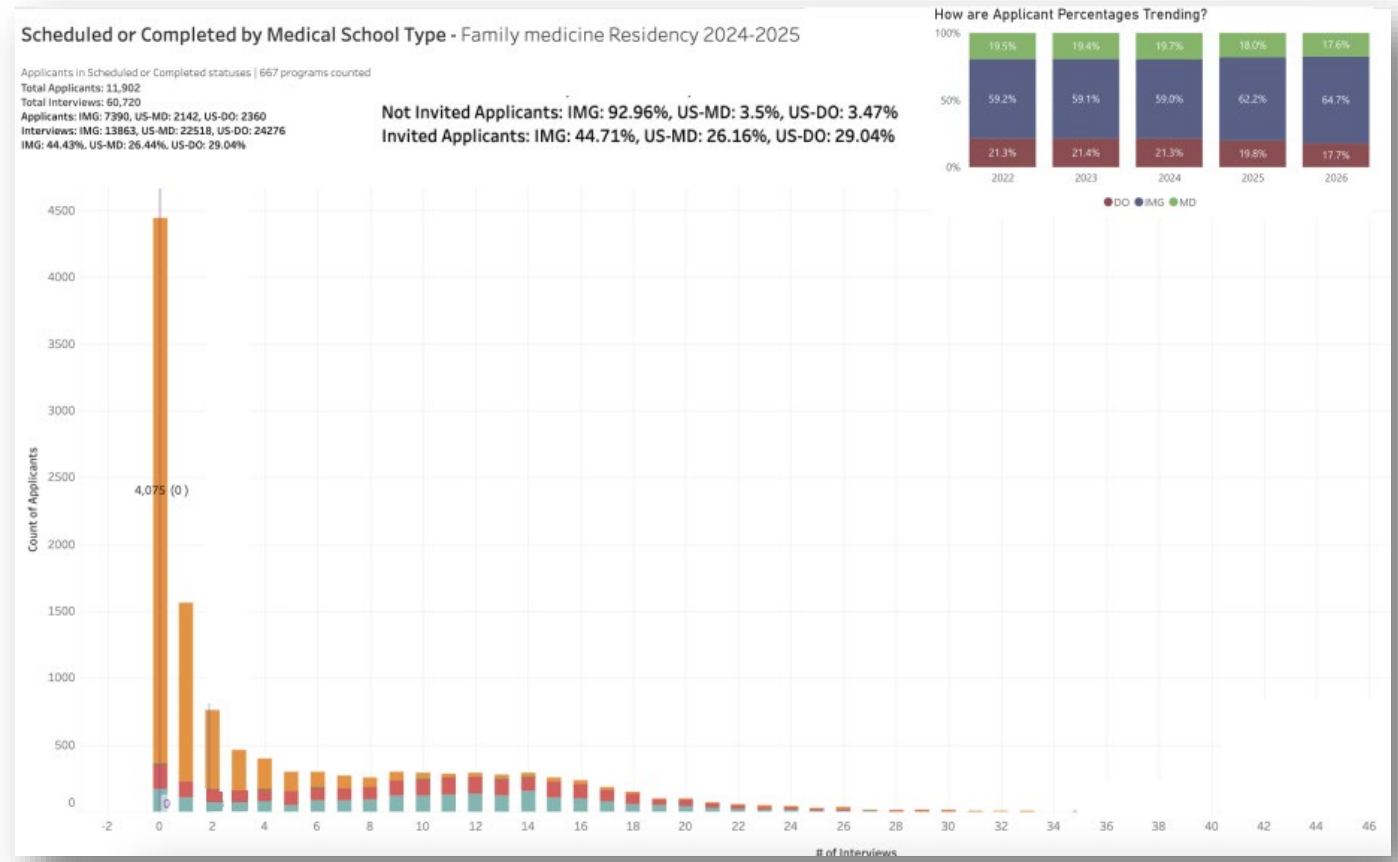
- Socialize recommended policies for the 2026-2027 Selection/Match Cycle that are now included in the [Program Director Association Guide for Applicants](#)
- Share accompanying resources and rationale: [AFMRD's webinar](#) on the policies, and the [interview guidelines explainer](#) with rationale.
- Assess the recommendations and adjust as needed for future years



#3. Improve Residency Selection and Match for International Medical Graduates and Multi-specialty Applicants

Priority 3: IMG/Multi-Specialty Data for FM ('24-'25)

- There are ~11,000 applicants for approximately 5,000 PGY-1 positions. Of those, about 5,000 receive only one or no interview offers
- High cross specialty applicants: 11K FM applicants → 16K to all specialties
- Opportunity insight: Expand the pool of applicants being considered



Source: Provided by Thalamus

Multi-Specialty Applicants: Key Associations

- More likely to apply to multiple specialties:
 - Reapplicants
 - IMGs
 - Education-related experience
 - Journal article experience (even if not published)(Higher odds: ~1.4-4.9x likely)
- Less likely to apply to multiple specialties:
 - MD or DO graduates
 - Extracurricular, volunteer, or teaching experience(Lower odds: ~0.85–0.95x likely)

Practical Strategies for FM Recruitment

- Build FM-leaning shortlists
 - Prioritize clear FM attributes: sustained service/volunteer work, teaching/mentoring, longitudinal community engagement, credible geographic ties, and FM-focused letters
 - Look for primary care endorsements or focus on primary care in LORs, electives and clerkship selections, and unique, personal lived experiences
- Avoid proxy assumptions
 - IMG/reapplicant $\neq$ low commitment
 - Multi-specialty behavior may reflect risk management
 - Remove broad screens (e.g. years since graduation) and focus on FM alignment
- Use interviews strategically
 - Single-specialty applicants already get more interviews; shift some interviews toward FM-leaning applicants to avoid missing them
- Capitalize on program signaling
 - Drive early interview offers using signals and publish how your program views and uses signals clearly

Next Steps

- Gather and highlight available resources and tools that can help programs identify IMGs that are mission-aligned
 - AFMRD/AFMA webinar: August 17th 11 am–12 pm CT: Revising IMG Application Review Process
 - AFMRD/AFMA webinar: September 29th 11 am–12 pm CT: IMG Transition to Residency
- Create guidance and resources to programs in their interview offer selections
 - Identifying FM-Leaning Applicants Aligned with Your Mission and Values – upcoming
 - Visa myths, facts, and tips – upcoming
- Participate in development of a FM-specific indicator (highlights an applicant's interest in family medicine) and Thalamus Preference Assessment tool (for “screen-in” application review)
- Work with AAMC on piloting changes to geographic preferences to better meet FM needs



#4. Support Dedicated FM Applicants

Priority 4: Support Dedicated FM Applicants

- **Multi-Phase Match Options:** Discussion with NRMP determined this would not meet FM's needs
- **Dedicated Pathways:** Support applicants dedicated to FM residency, such as track programs with Match reversion options, and learn from accelerated pathway programs
- **Next steps:** Continue to explore how best to support FM-dedicated applicants with AAMC and NRMP, including track options



Summary and Q&A

Residency Selection and Improvement Initiative (RSII)

Goal: Fill all family medicine residency positions in the most effective, efficient and economical way possible.

Help applicants find FM programs that align with their values and interests | Help residencies find the best applicants for their programs

Create a One-stop Information Tool

Streamline the process of finding FM residency information for applicants.

Because of RSII: The Residency Explorer™ tool and Careers in Medicine® now feature AAFP and ABFM data on the FM specialty profile, alongside FM-specific details on individual program pages, streamlining the research process for applicants.

Re-imagine the Interview Process

Make the interview process easier, equitable, effective and efficient for residencies and applicants.

Because of RSII: The Program Directors Association Guide for Applicants for FM now features six workgroup recommendations regarding interview offer and acceptance timelines. RSII has developed a dedicated explainer to help provide the rationale and context for these guidelines.

Improve Residency Selection and Match for International Medical Graduates and Multi-specialty Applicants

Increase the number of high-quality IMG and multi-specialty applicants who are selected for interview.

Because of RSII: Current workstreams focus on three areas: resources to help programs identify qualified IMG and multi-specialty applicants; targeted guidance and tools to debunk myths surrounding non-U.S. IMG visa processing; and structural input on a new FM-specific indicator to better capture applicant interest.

Support Dedicated FM Applicants

Make the matching process more efficient and economical for programs and applicants.

Overall Strategy: Support FM-dedicated applicants by helping programs better understand existing residency selection pathways, alongside working with the AAMC and NRMP to explore potential pathway opportunities.



RSII North Star Leadership Group: Strategic support and guidance provided by residency program directors, program coordinators/administrators, medical school advisors and students/residents.

To Do's for Programs

1. Participate in ongoing discussions about the best ways to improve the family medicine residency selection and recruitment system.
2. Encourage programs to update profiles ([AAFP Residency Census](#) and GME Track Program Survey)
3. Adjust your interview offer, acceptance and applicant status notice timelines.
4. Consider your mission-aligned residency interview selection criteria to expand the pool of qualified applicants to find those are most aligned and likely to choose your program and who will perform well in your program.

Advice to Student Advisors and Applicants

1. Encourage applicants to utilize Residency Explorer™ tool and Careers in Medicine®
2. Applicants can highlight their interest in family medicine in their applications by including:
 - experience with comprehensive/continuous care across different patient populations and settings
 - service/volunteer work
 - teaching/mentoring
 - longitudinal community engagement
 - credible geographic ties
 - family medicine-focused letters

Questions? Contact us.

 kmitchell@aafp.org

 [Webpage at aafp.org: Residency Selection Improvement Initiative \(RSII\) | AAFP](https://www.aafp.org/Residency-Selection-Improvement-Initiative-(RSII))


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Residency Selection Improvement Initiative (RSII)






Related topics

[Residency Program Directors](#)

Related articles



News

AAFP residency initiative drives changes for 2027 Match

The AAFP's Residency Selection Improvement Initiative is driving changes that will help programs and applicants in time for the 2027 Match cycle.

On this page

[The RSII framework](#)
[Why change is needed](#)
[About RSII](#)
[Priority areas and recommendations](#)
[Resources and tools](#)

The AAFP's Residency Selection Improvement Initiative (RSII) is bringing together family medicine leaders, residency programs, medical students and national organizations to improve the residency selection and recruitment process.



Thank you!

Karen Mitchell MD
kmitchell@aafp.org