This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 4:05:00 2026 / +0000 GMT

Canadian Medical Association: Is the application process fair, or a farce?

OUR READERS WRITE

After hearing the news a few months ago, on the issue where the hospitals will find themselves ?understaffed? due to the departure of the Saudi Medical Students, I could not help but wonder why should the government be in a quandary, when there are skilled and very accomplished doctors in Canada working odd jobs for less than minimum wage, just so they can keep themselves as close to the medical field as possible? Can't the skills of these Doctors be harnessed to alleviate this lack?

These persons are in Canada expecting that they would be able to enter into residency after passing the requisite Canadian Exams. They have spent thousands of dollars on Application fees, and examination fees. Some doctors who were born in English speaking countries and educated in English speaking schools, have had to spend fee after fee every so often, sitting exams to prove that they can speak English.

These well-trained persons are at this very minute working in the clothing industries, some have turned to other professions, being very disappointed as it appears that they are unable even to get a toe in the door.

I know at this time of at least three very accomplished doctors with bona-fide credentials, who worked in their previous countries of residence and come highly recommended, even had their own private practices, and are unable to even get a glance from the recruiters. One such foreign-trained physician, after years of working in Canada as an assistant, had to move to a distant province, in order to realise his dream of re-entering his profession. For many foreign-trained physicians, the option of moving does not exist due to ties to their families.

One of the frustrations encountered by a doctor I personally know, was that the Canadian licensing body she applied to required 12 months of internship. She completed 11 months' internship at the university where she studied, and another 12 months internship at another hospital after she returned to her homeland. Well, the university to which she applied said she did not qualify for entry because the internship of 11 months was lacking one month, and the internship done in her homeland of 12 months is not relevant, as internship should be done prior to graduation from Med School.

All this was deemed crucial to her application despite her practicing independently as a physician in her home country for seven years after internship. The additional frustrations include the realization that excellent scores in the qualifying medical examinations do not even guarantee a spot in the residency match for qualification as a physician. It seems to be a matter of who the applicant knows in the system, furthermore, there are far too few residency spots available for the tens of thousands of applicants each year.

The shortage of physicians is not merely a result of the return of the Saudi students. For years Ontario residents have suffered through long wait times to see specialists physicians, and the inability to find a family physician who will accept new patients. For many Ontarians, healthcare isn't as accessible as it should be.

I sincerely hope that some changes can be made to the system that will both address the shortage of physicians in our country, as well as the thousands of qualified doctors in need of employment. As the United States seeks to implement immigration policies similar to what exists in Canada, I have to wonder about the purpose of the role of demanding that potential immigrants display their credentials.

It seems futile for one to have to prove their qualifications as a medical doctor in order to immigrate, only to later be unable to practice in their profession after relocating.

Chris Clark

Shelburne resident