

Travel restrictions 'a step backward' for US medical education, research and health care

February 1 2017

The executive order restricting individuals from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US is 'a step backward,' for medical education, patient care and biomedical research in this country, write medical department leaders from Massachusetts General Hospital and six other major academic medical centers.

In a Perspectives article published Online First in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, leaders of the Departments of Medicine at seven major [academic medical centers](#) characterize the executive order restricting individuals from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the U.S. as "a step backward" for medical education, patient care and biomedical research in this country. Written by Katrina Armstrong, MD, physician in chief at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), the article expresses concern "that the consequences of this approach for U.S. health care, and our field of internal medicine, are far reaching and damaging."

Armstrong and her co-authors cite the importance of the free exchange of ideas among clinicians and medical scientists around the world, and note that, "Over the past 50 years, the U.S. biomedical research enterprise has benefited greatly from the ideas, creativity, ingenuity, and drive of international medical graduates and other non-U.S. nationals engaged in [biomedical research](#)."

They cite the key contributions of foreign-born physicians and scientists to U.S. hospitals and academic medical centers, as well as to U.S.-based

global health and disaster relief efforts. The article notes that international medical graduates receiving residency training at U.S. hospitals often go on to work in underserved areas of this country—including rural and Native American communities—or in the Veterans Health Administration system.

As an example of the immediate impact of the executive order, the article states that more than 100 personnel at Boston-based Partners HealthCare, which includes MGH and Brigham and Women's Hospital, have been directly affected by the order. Suspension of the Visa Interview Waiver Program—which allows "low-risk" individuals previously screened and interviewed for a prior visa application to reapply without an additional interview—"risks creating substantial backlogs in the processing of new and renewal visas for trainees from any foreign country," they write.

The authors conclude that "immigration policy that blocks the best from coming to train and work in the United States and blocks our trainees and faculty from safely traveling to other countries is a step backward, one that will harm our patients, colleagues, and America's position as a world leader in health care and innovation."

More information: *New England Journal of Medicine*, www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1701339

Provided by Massachusetts General Hospital

Citation: Travel restrictions 'a step backward' for US medical education, research and health care (2017, February 1) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-02-restrictions-medical-health.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.