

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE • 2026 EDITION

THE U.S. EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO RECRUITING INDIAN MEDICAL TALENT

Federal Regulatory Framework & State-Level Compliance

India-trained physicians address the U.S. physician shortage at scale. CLIRNET delivers a fully compliant pipeline of USMLE-ready talent — across H-1B, J-1 Conrad 30, and O-1 visa pathways.

- Cap-exempt hospital pathway — bypass the H-1B lottery entirely
- Conrad 30 waiver tracking — state slot availability updated monthly
- Tennessee Residency Bypass model & 2026 state expansions covered

H-1B

Cap-Exempt
Available

J-1

Conrad 30
Tracked

O-1

Extraordinary
Ability



I Executive Summary

In 2026, the U.S. physician shortage has reached a critical inflection point. Hospitals face unprecedented vacancy rates while regulatory frameworks have evolved to fast-track qualified international medical graduates. India-trained physicians — USMLE-certified, English-proficient, and experienced in high-volume tertiary care — represent the most viable and compliant solution available.

CLIRNET's platform delivers a **100% compliant pipeline** across all three federal visa pathways, with real-time Conrad 30 slot tracking and coverage of the 2026 state-level residency bypass expansion.

KEY METRIC	CLIRNET COMMITMENT
Visa Pathways Covered	H-1B (Cap-Exempt), J-1 Conrad 30, O-1
Conrad 30 Tracking	Monthly slot availability per state
Credentialing Standard	USMLE / ECFMG verified, ECFMG Credential Passport
State Licensure Support	Tennessee model + 2026 expansion states
Language Proficiency	OET / IELTS verified, English-medium education

II The Federal Regulatory Framework

Three primary visa pathways form the foundation of compliant international physician hiring in the United States. Each carries distinct advantages depending on hospital type, specialty need, and timeline.

VISA	2026 CONTEXT	BEST FOR
H-1B (Cap-Exempt)	Non-profit & university hospitals bypass the annual lottery. Fastest route to onboarding for qualifying institutions.	Teaching hospitals, non-profit health systems
J-1 Conrad 30	State participation at all-time high. CLIRNET tracks open slots per state monthly — critical for timely placement.	Underserved area placements, primary care
O-1 (Extraordinary)	Ideal for high-impact specialists and researchers with documented achievements and publications.	Specialists, researchers, academics

ABSOLUTE TRUTH SOURCE

USCIS Official H-1B Physician Guidance — <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/h-1b>
 USCIS Conrad 30 Waiver Program — <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/j-1-conrad>

III The State-Level Licensure Revolution

The "**Residency Bypass**" model is no longer an experiment — it is an established and expanding recruitment strategy that significantly reduces time-to-practice for qualified IMGs.

The Tennessee Benchmark

Tennessee's 2024 law allowing experienced international doctors to practice without U.S. residency is now **fully operational** and serving as the national template. Physicians with 3+ years of post-graduate clinical experience in their home country qualify

for an expedited licensure pathway.

The 2026 Expansion

Following Tennessee's success, states including **Florida, Virginia, and Illinois** have implemented similar pathways for highly qualified IMGs. CLIRNET's platform provides monthly updates on which states currently offer the most accessible hiring paths.

STATE	STATUS	KEY FEATURE
Tennessee	✓ Fully Operational	Residency bypass for 3+ yr experienced IMGs
Florida	✓ Active (2025)	Expedited pathway for board-eligible specialists
Virginia	✓ Active (2026)	Fast-track for underserved area placements
Illinois	✓ Active (2026)	Pilot programme for primary care IMGs

ABSOLUTE TRUTH SOURCE

FSMB Directory of State Medical Boards — <https://www.fsmb.org/contact-a-member-board>

IV

Credentialing & Quality Assurance (2026 Standards)

Every CLIRNET recruit arrives with a digital "**Credential Passport**" — a verified, audit-ready dossier that satisfies Joint Commission, CMS, and hospital medical staff office requirements from day one.

Primary Source Verification: Degrees and clinical history verified at source in India via ECFMG-approved protocols.

USMLE / ECFMG Status: Real-time tracking of Step 1, Step 2 CK, and Step 3 scores. ECFMG Certification confirmed prior to placement.

Language Proficiency: OET or IELTS scores verified. English-medium medical education confirmed for each candidate.

Clinical Experience Record: Structured post-graduate experience log from Indian tertiary hospitals, formatted for U.S. credentialing committees.

ABSOLUTE TRUTH SOURCE

ECFMG / Intealth Official Site — <https://www.ecfm.org>

V

Why Indian Physicians? The 2026 Advantage

ADVANTAGE	DETAIL
USMLE Ready	India produces more USMLE Step 1 & 2 first-time passers than any other non-U.S. country — a pipeline of proven clinical competence.
Volume Experience	Training in India's highest-volume tertiary centres provides exposure to complex, high-acuity case mixes that exceed typical U.S. residency volumes.
Cap-Exempt Access	Non-profit hospitals can onboard via Cap-Exempt H-1B without waiting for the annual lottery — cutting time-to-hire by up to 12 months.
Retention	Conrad 30 J-1 physicians are contractually committed to a minimum 3-year placement, delivering exceptional long-term retention for rural and underserved facilities.

Ready to build your USMLE-ready physician team?

Contact our U.S. partnerships team at partnerships@clirnet.com or visit www.clirnet.com to begin your compliant recruitment journey.