

It's game, set, Match Day for DMS '08s

The subdued chatter in the auditorium, the tension on the faces of the medical students gathered there, and the time—high noon on March 20—all pointed to the same conclusion: Match Day had finally arrived.

It's a special day in the lives of doctors-to-be. At noon Eastern Time on the third Thursday of March, medical school seniors all across the country learn where they will go for training in the specialty of their choice.

At DMS, the '08s, excited but apprehensive, gathered in a DHMC auditorium with their families and members of the faculty. The focus of everyone's attention was a stack of white envelopes at the front of the room—one envelope per student, each one containing the name of the institution where that student would begin residency training on July 1.

Fill: The room was filled with nervous anticipation for a good reason: a record 28,737 candidates had applied to the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) for 22,240 first-year residency positions. Using a computer algorithm, the NRMP matches the preferences of applicants with those of residency program directors to fill openings at U.S. teaching hospitals. On Match Day, the destinies of those thousands of future doctors are revealed, simultaneously, throughout the nation.

School-specific matching percentages are no longer re-

ported by the NRMP, but nationwide 94.2% of the applicants found a placement within the Match, and 84.6% matched at one of their top three choices.

Impressive: Dr. David Nierenberg, senior associate dean for medical education, described the results at DMS as “a very impressive Match list indeed.” As the envelopes were handed out, one by one, the tense smiles gave way to big grins and bear hugs. The relatively small class size at DMS makes Match Day a very personal affair, with an abundance of genuine good cheer among classmates who have grown close over the course of their medical education.

“We're extremely happy,” said Christina Devine after the ceremony, expressing a sentiment felt by many in the class. She is heading to Santa Clara Medical Center in San Jose, Calif., for a residency in internal medicine. “We're sad to leave, but it all worked out,” she added.

Popular: Of the 62 DMS students expected to get their M.D.'s in 2008, 58 participated in the NRMP. Obstetrics and gynecology was the most popular program this year, with nine matches, in contrast to none in 2007. “This is partly because some students who would have matched in ob-gyn last year decided to split Year 4 for various reasons,” explained Nierenberg. Other popular specialties for DMS '08s were anesthesiology,

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1 The aisles were overflowing in Auditorium G on Match Day. **2** Each of the 58 soon-to-be-graduates, like Dan Levin here, collected their NRMP envelope. **3** Then the students, many with help from family members, nervously opened their envelopes; here, Colby Wyatt and his wife, Amy, learn that he'll be doing his residency at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. Soon all the envelopes were open and everyone was sharing their good news—including **4** Jessica Wallaert and Doug Jones, who are both going into surgery—she at DHMC and he at Cornell's New York Presbyterian Hospital, and **5** Christina Devine, right, who's going into a Stanford internal medicine program, celebrating here with Severina Haddad, an '08 physiology Ph.D. grad.

ALL: LAUREN WOOD

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general surgery, and pediatrics, followed closely by radiology. Interest in family medicine continued its slide of the last few years, drawing only two students.

Massachusetts, proving again to be a very popular destination, will welcome 12 DMS residents next year in various programs, most in the Boston area. Eight students will continue their training at DHMC.

Delight: Then, half an hour after the ceremony began, the room was empty. The graduates had headed off to plan for the next stage of their professional lives. Colby Wyatt, an M.D.-Ph.D. student, shared with his wife, Amy, his delight in a first-choice match in pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. "It's been 10 years," he said, "but it's been worth it. We're really excited."

The residency assignments for all the '08s are in the adjacent box, along with those of this year's graduates of the Brown-Dartmouth program. Although that joint program is no longer accepting applications, there are still current students in the pipeline.

Crop: Match Day also brought word to the directors of DHMC's residency programs of the incoming crop of residents. There will be 81 starting at Dartmouth-Hitchcock's Lebanon campus on July 1. In addition, the New Hampshire-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency is welcoming eight first-year residents this year, and 10 new residents will join the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency.

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