

# Why Indian Students Are Turning to the Philippines for a Safer Medical Education Pathway

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In an era of changing global immigration rules, stability in medical education has become more valuable than ever. The recent hike of the U.S. H-1B visa application fee to USD 100,000 in September 2025 is a stark reminder that visa-dependent pathways can quickly turn uncertain. For Indian medical aspirants investing years of effort and savings, choosing a secure, recognised, and affordable destination is now non-negotiable and the Philippines stands out as one of the most dependable choices.



**Dr. David Pillai, CEO and Founding Chairman of Transworld Educare**

India's domestic medical education landscape further amplifies this urgency. In 2025, nearly 23 lakh students registered for NEET-UG, with about 22 lakh appearing for the exam and only 12 lakh qualifying. All of them competed for just 1.23 lakh MBBS seats across 780 medical colleges nationwide. While government colleges offer affordable education, the number of seats remains severely limited. On the other hand, private medical colleges often charge anywhere between Rs. 50 lakh and Rs. 1 crore for an MBBS degree, putting them out of reach for many academically capable students. For thousands of families, pursuing medical education abroad is therefore not a preference, but a practical necessity.



## **Kadwin Pillai, Managing Director of Transworld Educare and Director of Kings International Medical Academy**

However, not every foreign medical university ensures a valid or secure career in India. Under National Medical Commission (NMC) regulations, students must qualify NEET, study for at least 54 months in a single institution, complete a one-year internship, and pursue education in English medium. Degrees from non-recognised universities will not qualify for licensure or FMGE/NExT in India. Hence, NMC recognition is critical to safeguarding a student's long-term prospects.

Globally, shifting visa and immigration policies have pushed students toward more predictable destinations. Between 2023 and 2024, Indian enrolments dropped 13% in the U.S., 41% in Canada, and 28% in the U.K. Meanwhile, Germany and Russia saw

a surge in enrolments – and the Philippines continues to gain traction as a secure, student-friendly option. Over 15,000 Indian students pursue MBBS in the Philippines each year, attracted by English-medium instruction, affordable fees, familiar climate, and a stable, transparent visa process.

Commenting on the growing shift toward stable and recognised destinations, **Dr. David Pillai, CEO and Founding Chairman of Transworld Educare**, says, “*Across the world, visa and immigration policies are becoming increasingly unpredictable, while the demand for qualified doctors in India continues to rise. In such an environment, students and parents must prioritise medical education pathways that are not only affordable but also fully recognised by Indian regulators. Choosing NMC-approved universities in countries like the Philippines allows students to focus on learning and clinical training, without the constant anxiety of changing visa rules or future eligibility challenges. Ultimately, a medical degree should offer clarity and continuity, not uncertainty.*”

The Philippines has steadily gained popularity among Indian medical aspirants due to its unique advantages. One of the key draws is that the medium of instruction is English, eliminating language barriers that often deter students from considering non-English-speaking countries. Additionally, the medical curriculum in the Philippines is based on the U.S. education system, which offers an international standard of learning and exposure. Another significant advantage is the clinical training students receive during their course. The Philippines has a tropical climate and disease patterns similar to those in India, ensuring Indian students are exposed to medical conditions they are likely to encounter during practice back home, providing them with relevant and practical clinical experience.

For families planning medical education abroad, the path is clear: choose NMC-approved universities in stable destinations like the Philippines, where affordability, recognition, and reliability ensure that the dream of becoming a doctor remains firmly within reach.

