

Visa and Immigration Information: For international patients/caregivers

Part 1: Consular information needed before you arrive at NIH

All international patients and caregivers receiving treatment at NIH need a B2 visa issued by the United States (U.S.) Consulate or Embassy in their country of origin.

- ▶ **The B2 visa allows** international patients and caregivers to enter the U.S. and obtain an extension to stay longer than 90 days to receive treatment at NIH.
- ▶ **NIH assists** with this process by sending the patient an invitation letter from the patient's research nurse. If the patient needs a caregiver, the letter includes the caregiver's name and the reason why he/she must accompany the patient.
- ▶ **It is the responsibility of the patient and/or caregiver** to be able to convince the consular official that they will return to their country of origin once treatment/evaluation ends.
- ▶ In addition to the NIH invitation letter, the visa applicant must provide the consular official with documents showing links to the country of origin as well as proof of financial support while the patient stays in the U.S. for treatment.

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP)

For patients from countries offering the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) or other

border entry exceptions (such as those provided to citizens of Mexico, Canada and the Bahamas):

- ▶ Visitors with passports from countries offering the choice to enter the U.S. under the "Visa Waiver Program" (VWP) should be aware of the strict, non-renewable 90-day limit they are permitted to stay in the U.S.
- ▶ Patients who use the VWP or other program that waives an entry visa, once the 90-day period has expired, **must** leave the U.S. and return to their country of origin (not border countries) to re-enter the U.S. under that program. Therefore, all international patients and their caregivers who come from countries offering the VWP or other border entry exceptions should get a B2 visa when visiting the U.S. for treatment at the NIH.
NIH will be unable to help patients or their caregivers extend their stay if they come under the VWP or other program that waives an entry visa.
- ▶ Because events are not predictable, getting a B2 visa is important for patients and caregivers even when they do not expect to stay longer than 90 days. With a B2 visa, the patient or caregiver can extend a stay in the U.S. without needing to leave the country.
- ▶ Currently, citizens of the following countries qualify for the Visa Waiver Program: Andorra, Australia, Austria,

Part 2: Immigration information needed when you arrive at NIH: Your visa and Form I-94

When you arrived in the U.S. you completed a small white or green card and presented it to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer. Usually, you received this card from either the airline staff before your airplane landed or your travel agent before you left for your trip. The following information explains the differences and purposes of a Visa and a Form I-94.

Your visa

Please take a moment to look at the document stamped into your passport by the U.S. consulate in your country. This is your visa.

- ▶ The visa allows you to enter the U.S. **The visa is not the document that allows you to remain in the U.S.**

A visa can be issued for one (1) or multiple (M) entries. It can have an expiration date any time between 1 day and 10 years. The expiration date on this document shows the last day you are allowed to enter and travel to the U.S. Once this date has expired, you cannot use this visa again to enter the U.S. You must request a new visa.

- ▶ **This visa will not:**
 - ▶▶ Protect you against deportation
 - ▶▶ Guarantee that you may stay for the period of time shown on the visa
 - ▶▶ Guarantee that you will be able to get a new visa in the future

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

0045 No 1651-0111

Departure Record

Admission Number
0000000000 00

18. Family Name

19. First (Given) Name

20. Birth Date (DD/MM/YY)

21. Country of Citizenship

Entry date: MAR 26 2007

Expiration date: SEP 25 2007

Class: B2

Example of Form I-94

Form I-94

As mentioned before, when you arrived in the U.S. you completed a small white or green card with your name. You then gave this card to the Customs and Border Protection officer.

This card is Form I-94. Form I-94 allows you a temporary stay in the U.S. You must keep this document with your passport at all times. Verify the date stamped on this form by CBP. This is the date when your stay in the U.S. will expire. This date will differ from the expiration date of your visa. The expiration date on Form I-94 can be before or after the expiration date of your visa.

- ▶ **Please contact your social worker 2 months before the expiration date stamped on your Form I-94.**

If you continue to need medical treatment at the NIH, your social worker will make an appointment with a staff member to help you extend your stay.

Part 3: Important to remember Assistance for issues unrelated to the medical stay at NIH

**NIH does not assist patients with issues
unrelated to their medical stays at NIH.**

Examples include:

- ▶ Getting a “Green Card”
- ▶ Paperwork related to a marriage, work permits or refugee or asylum requests
- ▶ Extensions of stay for persons who entered the country under the Visa Waiver Program or for those who are not the patient or the caregiver.

For travelers to the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program or other programs

- ▶ If you traveled to the U.S. on the Visa Waiver Program or other programs that waive an entry visa *and* you have a green Form I-94W, **NIH cannot assist you with an extension of stay.**
- ▶ Visitors with passports from countries that offer the choice to enter the U.S. under the “Visa Waiver Program” should be aware of the strict, non-renewable 90-day limit they are permitted to stay in the U.S. Patients who use the VWP **MUST** leave the U.S. once the 90-day period has expired and return to their country of origin (not border countries) to get a new entry under this program.

▶ Special note regarding international school-age children on B2 visas

Due to U.S. Federal and state laws, international school-age children on B2 visas may not enroll in primary or secondary public schools. **Enrollment may cause them and their family members to be refused a visa to enter the U.S. in the future.**

Please note: This information is provided for your assistance. No warranty is provided as to its accuracy or usefulness. It is not meant to replace the information from Federal agencies responsible for immigration services.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

Products/resources named serve as examples and do not imply endorsement by NIH. The fact that a certain product/resource is not named does not imply that such product/resource is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>

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