



GLOBAL NAVIGATORS



COUNCIL OF MEDICAL SPECIALTY SOCIETIES

# Navigating the Rocky Shores of Global Expansion

Business Intelligence on  
International Physician Engagement  
With US Medical Societies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Introduction

The report was designed to help US medical societies better understand how internationally based physicians engage with US medical societies and what drives or limits that engagement. It responds to a growing need for evidence-based international strategy in an environment shaped by changing perceptions of US institutions, evolving funding models, and increasing demand for globally relevant education and collaboration.

## Executive Summary

US medical societies are increasingly important to physicians outside the United States, but this report shows that international engagement works best when approached as a flexible, multi-pathway strategy rather than a membership-first model. While US societies are respected for scientific content, education, and professional credibility, local medical societies remain the primary source of identity, community, and in-person engagement for most international physicians.

The findings suggest that US medical societies have the strongest opportunity to grow through lower-barrier offerings such as virtual participation, free education, local chapter or in-country access points, and scholarly contribution pathways. International physicians appear more likely to value US societies as trusted sources of information than as authorities whose clinical guidelines automatically apply in every local context. This reinforces the importance of relevance, trust, and partnership with local professional ecosystems.

Financial barriers are the most significant obstacle to deeper engagement. Most physicians report paying for participation themselves, while employer support for dues, travel, and meetings is limited. Travel and visa barriers are also important in some regions, but cost is the most consistent challenge across markets. These findings suggest that affordability, accessibility, and market-specific approaches will be essential to any sustainable international strategy.

Overall, the report supports a shift toward segmented global engagement strategies that recognize strong local professional infrastructure, reduce reliance on high-cost participation, and build long-term relationships through practical value. The most effective international strategies will likely be those that complement local societies, expand access to trusted education and resources, and create multiple ways for physicians to engage over time.

## Methodology

The study combined discussions with participating societies and a shared online survey of physicians practicing outside the United States who were currently or recently engaged with US medical societies. The survey explored engagement patterns, motivations, barriers, perceptions, and future intent, with results analyzed using de-identified responses from valid participants only.

This study was envisioned, designed, and executed by Global Navigators in partnership with the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS).

Global Navigators is a management consulting firm supporting organizations with a range of management services, with a primary focus on research, strategy, and growth.

Jakub Konysz provided overall strategic vision, management, and leadership, guiding study execution and ensuring findings were documented clearly and consistently. Monica Dignam led the study design and analysis, translating study objectives into a structured instrument and synthesizing results into actionable insights. Erin Dean supported study administration, coordinating logistics and documentation to ensure smooth implementation and timely delivery.

As a coalition of more than 50 organizations representing nearly 1 million physicians, CMSS the unique role of medical specialty societies. We advance the expertise and collective voice of specialty societies and the patients they serve to drive meaningful change in the future of healthcare. Julia Peterson oversaw this partnership with Global Navigators and engagement with member specialty societies to ensure our collective objectives were met. Brian Stevenson supported study administration, coordinating logistics with member societies. Dr. Helen Burstin provided strategic guidance and valuable clinician perspectives to the study. Finally, our participating CMSS member societies saw the value in a collective study, brought forward meaningful questions to guide the direction of the survey, and facilitated communication and dissemination with their constituents.



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