

Association of Professors of Dermatology (APD) Program Director Task Force statement on preference signaling for the 2020-2021 application cycle

September 18, 2020

Preference signaling refers to the use of token(s) by residency applicants to express interest in a residency program during application review and prior to interview invite release. This formalized process allows applicants to express interest in a small number of programs apart from traditional methods of email, phone calls, or virtual or in-person away rotations. The goal is to ease application overload and provide programs credible expression of interest by applicants.

While the APD PD Task Force and APD Board have discussed mechanisms for preference signaling and has engaged with other specialties in ongoing discussions, we have decided that this effort requires further consideration. **We will not be implementing preference signaling for the 2020-2021 dermatology residency application cycle.**

We hope that the pilot program that otolaryngology is pursuing this year, with support of AAMC and NRMP, will provide additional data upon which to decide if this tool would be feasible for future dermatology application cycles. We will also continue to participate in cross-specialty discussions of preference signaling and other application process reforms.

There is a separate entity, Signal (@SignalTokens, signaltokens.org) that is marketing the use of tokens to students and programs via email and social media. This involves a fee to students, and does not guarantee that programs have registered to receive tokens. **Given potential issues with equity and added expenses, the APD recommends against programs and dermatology residency applicants registering with the Signal service for this application cycle.**