

February 5, 2014

### **All immigrant visa applicants must undergo a medical exam**

**Question:** *I'm a United States citizen petitioning for my adult children to immigrate to the US. In December 2012, my son failed the medical examination associated with his immigrant visa application. He received a letter stating that he is ineligible for a visa until after December 2013. Now that this date has passed, how does he begin the application process again?*

A: US law prevents the issuance of an immigrant visa to anyone who is determined to have certain communicable diseases of public significance, physical or mental disorders that may cause harm to others, and to anyone determined to have drug abuse or dependence issues. All immigrant visa applicants are required to undergo a medical examination, and the panel physician will determine if any of these ineligibilities apply.

Individuals who have a communicable disease for which treatment is available may resume their application once they have successfully completed treatment. The panel physician will send an updated medical report to the embassy once he or she determines that the condition has been properly treated. The embassy will then contact the applicant to resume processing of the visa application.

Applicants who are determined to have an ineligibility for drug abuse or dependence, including marijuana, are ineligible to immigrate to the United States for one year. Prior to June 1, 2010, individuals found ineligible for drug use were ineligible for three years. The policy change in June 2010 was retroactive; applicants who were previously told they are ineligible for three years are now ineligible for only one year.

After one year has passed, if the applicant wishes to continue the visa application process, he or she must contact the Immigrant Visa Unit by emailing [KingstonIV@state.gov](mailto:KingstonIV@state.gov). The Immigrant Visa Unit will then send specific instructions to the applicant about how to resume processing of the immigrant visa application. The Immigrant Visa Unit does not have public phone lines; all correspondence should be conducted via e-mail. When the application process is resumed, the applicant will be required to undergo a new medical examination.

Certain documents associated with an immigrant visa application — such as a police certificate and a fee-paid receipt — are only valid for one year. Therefore, those documents may expire during the period of ineligibility for drug use. The Immigrant Visa Unit will provide details about what steps your son must take to ensure that all of his documents are up to date.

In most cases, medical ineligibilities can be overcome and applicants can successfully obtain immigrant visas. Encourage your son to contact the Immigrant Visa Unit to resume processing of his case.

For additional information about immigrant visas, including how to and where to schedule a medical exam, please visit our website at: [http://kingston.usembassy.gov/immigrant\\_visas.html](http://kingston.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html).