
SENATE BILL 6551

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senators Stanford, Saldaña, Darneille, Dhingra, Frockt, Hasegawa, and Wilson, C.

Read first time 01/22/20. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to integrating international medical graduates
2 into Washington's health care delivery system; amending RCW 18.71.051
3 and 18.71.095; adding new sections to chapter 18.71 RCW; and
4 providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 18.71
7 RCW to read as follows:

8 (1) The international medical graduate implementation work group
9 is established. The work group membership must consist of the
10 following members appointed by the governor:

11 (a) A representative from the commission;

12 (b) A representative from the department of health, health
13 systems quality assurance division;

14 (c) A representative from the University of Washington school of
15 medicine graduate medical education program;

16 (d) A representative from the Washington State University Elson
17 S. Floyd college of medicine graduate medical education program;

18 (e) A representative from the Pacific Northwest University of
19 Health Sciences college of osteopathic medicine graduate medical
20 education program;

- 1 (f) A representative from a statewide association representing
2 physicians;
- 3 (g) A representative from the Washington state family medicine
4 residency network;
- 5 (h) A representative from a primary care health care employer in
6 a rural or underserved area of Washington;
- 7 (i) A representative from a health carrier offering coverage in a
8 rural or underserved area of Washington;
- 9 (j) A licensed physician with experience working with
10 international medical graduates;
- 11 (k) A representative from an organization specializing in refugee
12 advocacy in Washington;
- 13 (l) A representative from an organization serving refugee
14 physicians and international medical graduates;
- 15 (m) A representative from an organization offering counseling and
16 educational programs to internationally trained health professionals;
- 17 (n) A representative from an organization representing community
18 and migrant health centers; and
- 19 (o) At least two international medical graduates.
- 20 (2) Staff support for the work group must be provided by the
21 department of health.
- 22 (3) The work group shall:
- 23 (a) Propose clinical readiness criteria for international medical
24 graduates using published benchmarks for medical school graduation or
25 residency admission;
- 26 (b) Propose a grant award process for distributing funds for
27 approved entities to provide career guidance and clinical training to
28 international medical graduates;
- 29 (c) Propose an evaluation process to grant a hardship waiver to
30 international medical graduates who cannot provide all necessary
31 documentation for licensure due to circumstances outside their
32 control; and
- 33 (d) Provide policy recommendations to the legislature.
- 34 (4) The work group must submit an annual report to the
35 legislature by June 30, 2021, and yearly thereafter.
- 36 (5) This section expires July 1, 2025.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 18.71
38 RCW to read as follows:

1 Based on recommendations from the international medical graduate
2 implementation work group, the commission shall adopt a clinical
3 assessment to determine the readiness of international medical
4 graduates to apply and serve in residency programs and adopt a grant
5 award process for distributing funds pursuant to section 3 of this
6 act.

7 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 18.71
8 RCW to read as follows:

9 Subject to appropriation by the legislature and donations
10 received from public and private entities, the department of health
11 shall award grant funding to:

12 (1) Approved entities for career guidance and support services to
13 international medical graduates including, but not limited to,
14 assistance with educational commission for foreign medical graduates
15 certification application and United States medical licensing
16 examination preparation; and

17 (2) Health care facilities or clinical programs to provide
18 supervised clinical training to international medical graduates.

19 **Sec. 4.** RCW 18.71.051 and 2011 c 138 s 1 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

21 (1) Applicants for licensure to practice medicine who have
22 graduated from a school of medicine located outside of the states,
23 territories, and possessions of the United States, the District of
24 Columbia, or the Dominion of Canada, shall file an application for
25 licensure with the commission on a form prepared by the secretary
26 with the approval of the commission. Each applicant shall furnish
27 proof satisfactory to the commission of the following:

28 ~~((1))~~ (a) That he or she has completed in a school of medicine
29 a resident course of professional instruction equivalent to that
30 required in this chapter for applicants generally;

31 ~~((2)(a))~~ (b)(i) Except as provided in (b)(ii) of this
32 subsection, that he or she meets all the requirements which must be
33 met by graduates of the United States and Canadian school of medicine
34 except that he or she need not have graduated from a school of
35 medicine approved by the commission;

36 ~~((b))~~ (ii) An applicant for licensure under this section is not
37 required to meet the requirements of RCW 18.71.050(1)(b) if he or she
38 furnishes proof satisfactory to the commission that he or she has:

1 ~~((i)(A))~~ (A)(I) Been admitted as a permanent immigrant to the
2 United States as a person of exceptional ability in sciences pursuant
3 to the rules of the United States department of labor; or

4 ~~((B))~~ (II) Been issued a permanent immigration visa; and

5 ~~((ii))~~ (B) Received multiple sclerosis certified specialist
6 status from the consortium of multiple sclerosis centers; and

7 ~~((iii))~~ (C) Successfully completed at least twenty-four months
8 of training in multiple sclerosis at an educational institution in
9 the United States with an accredited residency program in neurology
10 or rehabilitation;

11 ~~((3))~~ (c) That he or she has satisfactorily passed the
12 examination given by the educational council for foreign medical
13 graduates or has met the requirements in lieu thereof as set forth in
14 rules adopted by the commission;

15 ~~((4))~~ (d) That he or she has the ability to read, write, speak,
16 understand, and be understood in the English language.

17 (2) An applicant may obtain an exceptional qualification waiver,
18 waiving requirements determined by the commission in rule, if they
19 possess an acceptable body of work related to research, medical
20 excellence, or employment, and have the recommendation of other
21 national or international experts in the same specialty or field.

22 **Sec. 5.** RCW 18.71.095 and 2017 c 45 s 1 are each amended to read
23 as follows:

24 The commission may, without examination, issue a limited license
25 to persons who possess the qualifications set forth herein:

26 (1) The commission may, upon the written request of the secretary
27 of the department of social and health services or the secretary of
28 corrections, issue a limited license to practice medicine in this
29 state to persons who have been accepted for employment by the
30 department of social and health services or the department of
31 corrections as physicians; who are licensed to practice medicine in
32 another state of the United States or in the country of Canada or any
33 province or territory thereof; and who meet all of the qualifications
34 for licensure set forth in RCW 18.71.050.

35 Such license shall permit the holder thereof to practice medicine
36 only in connection with patients, residents, or inmates of the state
37 institutions under the control and supervision of the secretary of
38 the department of social and health services or the department of
39 corrections.

1 (2) The commission may issue a limited license to practice
2 medicine in this state to persons who have been accepted for
3 employment by a county or city health department as physicians; who
4 are licensed to practice medicine in another state of the United
5 States or in the country of Canada or any province or territory
6 thereof; and who meet all of the qualifications for licensure set
7 forth in RCW 18.71.050.

8 Such license shall permit the holder thereof to practice medicine
9 only in connection with his or her duties in employment with the city
10 or county health department.

11 (3) Upon receipt of a completed application showing that the
12 applicant meets all of the requirements for licensure set forth in
13 RCW 18.71.050 except for completion of two years of postgraduate
14 medical training, and that the applicant has been appointed as a
15 resident physician in a program of postgraduate clinical training in
16 this state approved by the commission, the commission may issue a
17 limited license to a resident physician. Such license shall permit
18 the resident physician to practice medicine only in connection with
19 his or her duties as a resident physician and shall not authorize the
20 physician to engage in any other form of practice. Each resident
21 physician shall practice medicine only under the supervision and
22 control of a physician licensed in this state, but such supervision
23 and control shall not be construed to necessarily require the
24 personal presence of the supervising physician at the place where
25 services are rendered.

26 (4) (a) Upon nomination by the dean of an accredited school of
27 medicine in the state of Washington or the chief executive officer of
28 a hospital or other appropriate health care facility licensed in the
29 state of Washington, the commission may issue a limited license to a
30 physician applicant invited to serve as a teaching-research member of
31 the institution's instructional staff if the sponsoring institution
32 and the applicant give evidence that he or she has graduated from a
33 recognized medical school and has been licensed or otherwise
34 privileged to practice medicine at his or her location of origin.
35 Such license shall permit the recipient to practice medicine only
36 within the confines of the instructional program specified in the
37 application and shall terminate whenever the holder ceases to be
38 involved in that program, or at the end of one year, whichever is
39 earlier. Upon request of the applicant and the institutional
40 authority, the license may be renewed. The holder of a teaching

1 research license under this subsection (4)(a) is eligible for full
2 licensure if the following conditions are met:

3 (i) If the applicant has not graduated from a school of medicine
4 located in any state, territory, or possession of the United States,
5 the District of Columbia, or the Dominion of Canada, the applicant
6 must satisfactorily pass the certification process by the educational
7 commission for foreign medical graduates;

8 (ii) The applicant has successfully completed the exam
9 requirements set forth by the commission by rule;

10 (iii) The applicant has the ability to read, write, speak,
11 understand, and be understood in the English language at a level
12 acceptable for performing competent medical care in all practice
13 settings;

14 (iv) The applicant has continuously held a position of associate
15 professor or higher at an accredited Washington state medical school
16 for no less than three years; and

17 (v) The applicant has had no disciplinary action taken in the
18 previous five years.

19 (b) Upon nomination by the dean of an accredited school of
20 medicine in the state of Washington or the chief executive officer of
21 any hospital or appropriate health care facility licensed in the
22 state of Washington, the commission may issue a limited license to an
23 applicant selected by the sponsoring institution to be enrolled in
24 one of its designated departmental or divisional fellowship programs
25 provided that the applicant shall have graduated from a recognized
26 medical school and has been granted a license or other appropriate
27 certificate to practice medicine in the location of the applicant's
28 origin. Such license shall permit the holder only to practice
29 medicine within the confines of the fellowship program to which he or
30 she has been appointed and, upon the request of the applicant and the
31 sponsoring institution, the license may be renewed by the commission.

32 All persons licensed under this section shall be subject to the
33 jurisdiction of the commission to the same extent as other members of
34 the medical profession, in accordance with this chapter and chapter
35 18.130 RCW.

36 Persons applying for licensure and renewing licenses pursuant to
37 this section shall comply with administrative procedures,
38 administrative requirements, and fees determined as provided in RCW
39 43.70.250 and 43.70.280. Any person who obtains a limited license
40 pursuant to this section may apply for licensure under this chapter,

1 but shall submit a new application form and comply with all other
2 licensing requirements of this chapter.

3 (5) The commission may issue a time-limited clinical experience
4 license to an applicant who does not qualify for licensure under RCW
5 18.71.050 or chapter 18.71B RCW and who meets the requirements
6 established by the commission in rule for the purpose of gaining
7 clinical experience at an approved facility or program.

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