
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1129

Brief Description: Concerning the licensure of international medical graduates.

Sponsors: Representatives Valdez, Stonier, Ortiz-Self, Goodman, Cody, Santos and Macri.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Authorizes the Washington Medical Commission to issue limited licenses to international medical graduates.
- Authorizes the Washington Medical Commission to issue limited licenses to persons who have been accepted for employment as physicians by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Hearing Date: 1/18/21

Staff: Corey Patton (786-7388).

Background:

Limited Licensure of International Medical Graduates.

International medical graduates (IMGs) are physicians who receive their medical school education outside the United States and Canada.

International medical graduates must go through medical licensing examinations and credential verifications to receive certification by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). International medical graduates who receive ECFMG certification become eligible to enter the United States' graduate medical education process, where they provide supervised patient care. The ECFMG certification is a requirement for IMGs to take Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination, as well as a prerequisite to obtaining an unrestricted license to practice medicine in the United States.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Washington Medical Commission (WMC) may issue a limited license to an applicant for the purpose of gaining clinical experience at an approved facility or program if the applicant:

- does not qualify for licensure as a United States or Canadian medical graduate; and
- meets the requirements established by the WMC.

Limited Licensure of United States and Canadian Medical Graduates.

The WMC may, upon the written request of the Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) or the Secretary of the Department of Corrections (DOC), issue limited licenses to persons who work with patients, residents, or inmates of state institutions under the control and supervision of the DSHS or the DOC. In 2019 the Department of Children, Youth, and Families assumed control of programs previously administered by the DSHS, including juvenile rehabilitation facilities, community facilities, and parole services.

Summary of Bill:

Limited Licensure of International Medical Graduates.

The Washington Medical Commission (WMC) may issue limited licenses to international medical graduates (IMGs) upon nomination by the chief medical officer of any licensed hospital or appropriate health care facility, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), the Department of Corrections (DOC), or a county or city health department.

An IMG applying for a limited license must:

- provide proof of certification by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates;
- pass the United States Medical Licensing Examination; and
- submit to the WMC background check as generally required of applicants.

An IMG practicing with a limited license may only practice within the nominating facility or organization, under the control of a licensed supervising physician of the same or substantially similar clinical specialty. An IMG must also file a practice agreement with the WMC between the IMG and the supervising physician. A supervising physician is limited to supervising 4 limited license holders, unless the WMC grants an increase upon the supervising physician's request.

A limited license for an IMG is valid for two years and may be renewed by the WMC upon application by the nominating entity.

Limited Licensure of United States and Canadian Medical Graduates.

The WMC may, upon the written request of the Secretary of the DCYF, issue limited licenses to persons who work with patients, residents, or inmates of state institutions under the control and supervision of the DCYF.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 13, 2021.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.