

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

**SENATE BILL 6551**

66th Legislature  
2020 Regular Session

Passed by the Senate February 18,  
2020

Yeas 27 Nays 19

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**President of the Senate**

Passed by the House March 3, 2020

Yeas 66 Nays 30

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**Speaker of the House of  
Representatives**

Approved

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**Governor of the State of Washington**

CERTIFICATE

I, Brad Hendrickson, Secretary of the Senate of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is **SENATE BILL 6551** as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives on the dates hereon set forth.

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**Secretary**

FILED

**Secretary of State  
State of Washington**

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**SENATE BILL 6551**

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Passed Legislature - 2020 Regular Session

**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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