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**SENATE BILL 5226**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Nobles and Stanford

AN ACT Relating to establishing funding for physician residency positions dedicated to international medical graduates in accordance with the waiver granted by the national residency matching program; adding new sections to chapter 18.71 RCW; creating new sections; providing an effective date; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  It is the intent of the legislature to increase the number of residency positions for the purpose of integrating the existing international medical graduate workforce in Washington state. The legislature finds that there is a clear disparity of international medical graduates successfully matching into Washington state residencies. Through the creation of a statutory structure upon which a statewide waiver from the national residency match program can be based, the legislature intends to address health care shortages and health equity through the creation of a grant program for international medical graduates who complete these specified residencies.

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

(1) Subject to the availability of amounts appropriated for this purpose, a grant program for international medical graduates is established. The purpose of the program is to increase placement of international medical graduates in the Washington state residency system. The commission may disburse grants to residency programs as authorized in this section and RCW 18.71.472 and 18.71.475.

(2) Authorized specialties that may receive grants include: Family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology, and general surgery. These specialty funding options may be expanded at the discretion of the commission based on available funding, qualified programs, and available residents.

(3) The commission may not use the funds allotted for this program for any purpose other than disbursal of grants and administrative costs associated with the program. The funding is not subject to use or diversion by the department of health or any other state entity.

(4) All residency programs receiving funding for positions under this section must:

(a) Operate under the waiver granted by the national residency matching program;

(b) Provide and operate the entire residency program with current and good standing accreditation from the accreditation council for graduate medical education;

(c) Result in the residency-trained physician being eligible to be board certified by a board recognized by the American board of medical specialties in the specialty trained; and

(d) Provide information to the commission upon request including, but not limited to, program information, accreditation, resident demographic information, and funding usage.

(5) The commission may adopt rules to implement this section.

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

In accordance with section 2 of this act, the commission shall:

(1) Establish processes and selection criteria for grant award recipients, one of which must be that no less than 75 percent of accepted residency positions be filled with international medical graduates. The commission may consider exceptions to this standard on a case-by-case basis.

(2) Create an advisory committee whose members are appointed by the commission executive director to provide support for establishing selection criteria, award decisions, and consideration of noncompliance issues. The advisory committee may be compensated under the community compensation guidelines. Members of the advisory committee must include, but are not limited to:

(a) A member of the commission;

(b) A residency program director or designee whose program does not stand to benefit from the funding specified in section 2 of this act;

(c) A member of a state ethnic health board; and

(d) A member of an organization representing the interests of international medical graduates in Washington state;

(3) Establish and enact controls and recovery procedures to ensure funds awarded are used for the contractually agreed-upon purposes;

(4) Accept grants, gifts, donations, or other funding sources for the sole purpose of funding these residency positions; and

(5) Disburse additional funds provided through legislative action should additional funding be available.

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

(1) The commission shall report to the legislature in accordance with RCW 43.01.036 by January 1st of each biennium, beginning with January 1, 2027, the following information:

(a) Number of residency positions funded and their location within the state;

(b) Number of residency physicians completing the residencies and their demographics; and

(c) Further recommendations for amount of funding or residency specialty expansion from those previously authorized.

(2) This section expires July 1, 2032.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  If specific funding for the purposes of this act, referencing this act by bill or chapter number, is not provided by June 30, 2025, in the omnibus appropriations act, this act is null and void.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and takes effect July 1, 2025.

**--- END ---**