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**SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5185**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** Senate Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Saldaña, Cortes, Cleveland, Wellman, Stanford, Nguyen, Chapman, Orwall, Dhingra, Valdez, Riccelli, Bateman, Hasegawa, and Nobles)

READ FIRST TIME 02/02/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing a pilot program that creates a  
2 pathway to physician licensure for international medical graduates;  
3 amending RCW 18.71.051; adding a new section to chapter 18.71 RCW;  
4 and providing an expiration date.

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

6 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.71.051 and 2020 c 325 s 4 are each amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (1) Applicants for licensure to practice medicine who have  
9 graduated from a school of medicine located outside of the states,  
10 territories, and possessions of the United States, the District of  
11 Columbia, or the Dominion of Canada, shall file an application for  
12 licensure with the commission on a form prepared by the secretary  
13 with the approval of the commission. Each applicant shall furnish  
14 proof satisfactory to the commission of the following:

15 (a) That he or she has completed in a school of medicine a  
16 resident course of professional instruction equivalent to that  
17 required in this chapter for applicants generally;

18 (b) ~~((i) Except as provided in (b) (ii) of this subsection, that))~~  
19 That he or she meets all the requirements which must be met by  
20 graduates of the United States and Canadian school of medicine except

1 that he or she need not have graduated from a school of medicine  
2 approved by the commission;

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

6 ~~(A) (I) Been admitted as a permanent immigrant to the United  
7 States as a person of exceptional ability in sciences pursuant to the  
8 rules of the United States department of labor; or~~

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

10 ~~(B) Received multiple sclerosis certified specialist status from  
11 the consortium of multiple sclerosis centers; and~~

12 ~~(C) Successfully completed at least twenty-four months of  
13 training in multiple sclerosis at an educational institution in the  
14 United States with an accredited residency program in neurology or  
15 rehabilitation;))~~

16 (c) That he or she has satisfactorily passed the examination  
17 given by the educational council for foreign medical graduates or has  
18 met the requirements in lieu thereof as set forth in rules adopted by  
19 the commission;

20 (d) That he or she has the ability to read, write, speak,  
21 understand, and be understood in the English language.

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

27 (3) The commission may adopt rules to establish a primary care  
28 license for applicants who have successfully completed the clinical  
29 experience graduate pilot program as outlined in section 2 of this  
30 act.

31 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. A new section is added to chapter 18.71  
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 (1) The commission shall establish and administer the clinical  
34 experience graduate pilot program.

35 (2) The pilot program must allow a medical graduate to  
36 participate in the program if the applicant:

37 (a) Holds a clinical experience license issued on or before July  
38 1, 2026;

1 (b) Has completed two years of continuous supervised clinical  
2 practice under a clinical experience license;

3 (c) Does not have any active disciplinary action or significant  
4 disciplinary history as determined by the commission;

5 (d) Has obtained satisfactory clinical assessment evaluations  
6 from the supervising physician in all categories in a clinical  
7 assessment evaluation approved by the commission for the period of  
8 supervised practice;

9 (e) Has obtained an attestation from the supervising physician;  
10 and

11 (f) Has obtained a written endorsement from the medical director  
12 of the practice site if different than the supervising physician.

13 (3) The Washington medical commission shall engage with the  
14 American board of medical specialties to consider a process for board  
15 certification for program participants.

16 (4) The pilot program shall create a pathway to full,  
17 unrestricted medical licensure to provide primary care upon  
18 successful completion of the following:

19 (a) Two years of supervised clinical experience license practice  
20 in addition to the two years of continuous supervised clinical  
21 practice under a clinical experience license needed to qualify for  
22 the pilot program;

23 (b) Requirements of the clinical experience license program;

24 (c) Step 3 of the United States medical licensing examination;  
25 and

26 (d) Passing a clinical competency assessment approved by the  
27 commission.

28 (5) Practice sites eligible for the program include:

29 (a) Hospitals;

30 (b) Federally qualified health centers;

31 (c) Government entities;

32 (d) Private practices or physician employment groups with at  
33 least 10 full-time equivalent, board-certified physicians that  
34 deliver patient care in Washington state; and

35 (e) Mental and behavioral health facilities, upon approval by the  
36 commission.

37 (6) By November 1, 2027, and until November 1, 2035, the  
38 commission must provide an annual report on the clinical experience  
39 graduate pilot program to the legislature. The report must include:

- 1           (a) Data about practice patterns of program participants,  
2 including, but not limited to, practice locations and specialty;  
3           (b) Relevant disciplinary actions taken against pilot program  
4 participants; and  
5           (c) Recommendations for how the pilot program could be expanded  
6 to include graduates of medical schools in the United States.  
7           (7) This section expires June 30, 2035.

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