



Keep Texas-trained International Medical Graduates Practicing in Texas

Texas faces a current and impending shortage of physicians—particularly primary care physicians—to meet the health care needs of our growing population. Yet an impediment in the licensing of a significant number of practice-ready new physicians presents many with a tough choice: accept a costly delay or abandon Texas to begin practicing medicine elsewhere.

International medical graduates, or IMGs, cannot receive medical licenses in Texas until they have completed three years of residency training, while physicians who graduated from U.S. medical schools can apply after only one year of residency. This requirement reduces the supply of new physicians in Texas.

- It discourages employers from offering IMGs positions right out of residency because they don't yet have their licenses, thus encouraging them to leave the state in search of work.
- Because physicians must have a medical license to be credentialed by Medicare and private insurers, it further delays the date after which they can be paid for their work.
- Because they must have a medical license to take their board examinations for certification by most medical specialty boards, including the American Board of Family Medicine, it delays their ability to achieve board certification, a requirement for insurance credentialing and hospital privileging.

For IMGs, these impediments could add up to months of unnecessary and costly delays before they can begin caring for patients. While they are unable to practice, their substantial medical education debt mounts.

Many IMGs obtain licenses in states like Oklahoma and New Mexico that require fewer residency years for licensure. These physicians are more likely to move to these states to practice, taking with them the substantial investment Texas has made in their education.

- ▶ *By changing the number of years of residency training IMGs must complete for medical licensure from three to two years, the Legislature can ensure that these physicians can start caring for patients as quickly as graduates of U.S. medical schools, thus improving Texans' access to care.*

IMGs COMPRISE A GROWING PORTION OF TEXAS' PRIMARY CARE WORKFORCE

One out of every four physicians in America is an IMG. In Texas, 38% of family medicine residents in training today are IMGs. Considering the increase in the number of IMGs going into family medicine over the last decade, it is clear that Texas depends on IMGs for a significant portion of our primary care physician workforce.

PERCENTAGE OF TEXAS FAMILY PHYSICIANS WHO ARE IMGs BY YEAR OF RESIDENCY COMPLETION



