

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: AB 2478
AUTHOR: Carrillo
BILL DATE: February 19, 2020, Introduced
SUBJECT: International medical graduates: study
SPONSOR: AltaMed
POSITION: Oppose

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT LEGISLATION:

This bill directs the Medical Board of California (Board) to conduct a study on increasing the existing pool of international medical graduates (IMGs).

RECENT AMENDMENTS

AB 2478 has not been amended since the Board adopted an Oppose position during its May 2020 meeting.

BACKGROUND:

Existing law, the Medical Practice Act, establishes the Board for the licensure and regulation of physicians and surgeons. Existing law establishes the University of California at Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine's International Medical Graduate Program to allow selected international medical graduates in a preresidency training program at the University of California, Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine to receive hands-on clinical instruction, as prescribed.

ANALYSIS:

This bill would state the Legislature finds and declares:

- Bilingual international medical graduates can help meet the needs of medically underserved regions with limited English proficient populations.
- There is an increasing number of undergraduate students born in the United States who attend medical school in foreign Spanish-speaking countries, and are considered international medical graduates.
- Spanish-speaking physicians, including Spanish-speaking international medical graduates, are highly underrepresented in California's physician workforce.

- California needs Spanish-speaking physicians to meet needs of Spanish-speaking limited English proficient patients more than any other linguistically underrepresented language group.
- The current supply is limited and insufficient to address the expected demand from the limited English proficient Spanish-speaking population.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to expand the existing pool of IMGs in the State.

This bill would require the Board to conduct a study by January 1, 2022, on achieving the following goals:

- Recruiting bilingual physicians trained in Spanish-speaking countries, and facilitating their practice in medically underserved areas with high Latino populations, including, but not limited to, Los Angeles, Orange County, the Central Valley, and the Inland Empire.
- Supporting international medical graduates training programs that enhance primary care residency match competitiveness.
- Identifying and supporting programs that help prepare international medical graduates to match in a competitive residency program in a primary care specialty, including family medicine, internal medicine, and pediatrics.
- Expanding the terms of service to priority areas to five-year terms for physicians and surgeons to retain international medical graduates in underserved areas for extended times.
- Adding a service contract requirement for those who enter the United States via J-1 and H1B visas, as these physicians do not currently have service requirements and are a potential source of bilingual primary care physicians.

The bill would require the Board, on or before January 1, 2022, to prepare and submit to the Legislature a report with recommendations to achieve the specified goals.

According to the sponsor, "California is experiencing an increasing shortage of primary care physicians, which is only expected to increase with an aging population. Unfortunately, those areas lacking the most access to medical services have high Latino, Black and Native American populations. As the Latino population continues to grow, the number of Latino physicians has not been able to catch up due to existing barriers such as financial costs, academic barriers, underrepresentation and citizenship issues. California needs Spanish-speaking physicians to meet the needs of limited English proficient patients. There is an increasing number of undergraduate students born in the United States who attend medical school in Spanish-speaking countries, and who are considered IMGs. Spanish-speaking physicians are highly underrepresented in

California’s physician workforce. Expanding IMG programs will help increase the supply of Latino physicians needed to address the growing demand in underserved areas.”

This bill seeks to help medically underserved regions with limited English proficient populations, by increasing bilingual physicians and supporting IMG training programs.

This bill will require the Board to conduct a study and submit the report to the Legislature. The Board does not have expertise in the area of the requested study and therefore would need to contract with an outside entity to perform the study. This will have a significant cost to the Board ranging from approximately \$50,000 to \$100,000. Board staff recommends that the Board take an oppose position on this bill.

FISCAL:

AB 2478 will result in a significant cost to the Board. The Board is estimating that the cost of the study would range from \$200,000 to \$500,000. The Board will need to contract with an outside entity to perform the study. The Board’s current fund condition could not absorb these significant costs and funding for this study is not accounted for in the Governor’s proposed FY 2020-21 budget.

SUPPORT: California Academy of Family Physicians
CaliforniaHealth+ Advocates
California Medicine Coalition
Latino Coalition for a Health California
Los Angeles County Medical Association
UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative
Former California State Senator Hernandez

OPPOSITION: Medical Board of California

ATTACHMENT: [AB 2478, Carrillo. International medical graduates: study.](#)