

Date of Hearing: April 3, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS

Evan Low, Chair

AB 2311 (Arambula) – As Introduced February 13, 2018

SUBJECT: Medicine: trainees: international medical graduates.

SUMMARY: Permanently establishes an existing pilot program that authorizes the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)'s International Medical Graduate (IMG) program trainees to provide patient care under physician supervision as part of a clinical clerkship/rotation at UCLA health care facilities or other approved UCLA affiliates.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the Medical Practice Act, which provides for the state's licensure and regulation of physicians and surgeons. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) § 2000 et seq.)
- 2) Establishes the MBC, a regulatory board within the Department of Consumer Affairs comprised of 15 appointed members, including 7 public members. (BPC § 2001)
- 3) Provides the MBC with responsibility for approving undergraduate and graduate medical education programs, approving clinical clerkship and special programs and hospitals, and administering the MBC's continuing medical education program. (BPC § 2004)
- 4) Authorizes the MBC's Division of Licensing to grant a physician's and surgeon's certificate only to applicants who, among other requirements, provide a diploma issued by an approved medical school; an official transcript evidencing pursued resident courses of professional instruction covering the minimum requirements for certification; proof of passage of written examinations; and proof of completion of the postgraduate training. (BPC § 2082)
- 5) Requires applicants for a physician's and surgeon's certificate to complete at least four years of specified medical education, consisting of at least 4,000 hours, completed in a medical school located in the United States or Canada approved by the MBC, or in an alternatively approved foreign medical school. (BPC § 2089)
- 6) Includes among the clinical instruction requirements for medical education a minimum of 54 weeks of providing physician-supervised patient care in a hospital that is part of or affiliated with a medical school, or through an approved residency program. (BPC § 2089.5)
- 7) States that nothing in the Medical Practice Act shall be construed to prevent a regularly matriculated medical school student or a foreign medical school student from engaging in the practice of medicine whenever and wherever prescribed as a part of a course of medical education. (BPC § 2064)
- 8) Establishes the University of California at Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine's International Medical Graduate Pilot Program, subject to sunset on January 1, 2019, which allows program trainees to provide physician-supervised patient care up to 24 weeks as part of an approved clinical clerkship/rotation at UCLA health care facilities or other approved UCLA affiliates. (BPC § 2066.5)

THIS BILL:

- 1) Makes UCLA's IMG program permanent by removing its statutory sunset date.
- 2) Strikes the word "pilot" from references to UCLA's IMG program to reflect its new permanent status.
- 3) Removes obsolete language regarding a completed reporting requirement.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown; this bill is keyed fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Purpose. This bill is co-sponsored by the **University of California Office of the President** and the **Medical Board of California**. According to the Author:

As an emergency room doctor who has practiced in underserved areas, I know the advantages to hiring doctors with knowledge of the language and cultural background of the population he or she will serve. The International Medical Graduate (IMG) pilot program serves multi-faceted purposes of providing international medical students the supervised patient care training they need to become doctors, preparing bi-lingual individuals for the workforce who match with family residency programs in California, and enhancing access to health care in our most disadvantaged communities. AB 2311 will codify this pilot program and allow UCLA IMG trainees to effectively prepare for entry into the medical profession by accessing supervised patient care training.

Background.

Like most state regulatory schemes for licensing medical doctors, California requires applicants for licensure as physicians and surgeons to complete a number of hours of medical education. This includes a minimum number of hours of providing direct patient care. This training is done under the supervision of a licensed physician and takes place in a medical school or as part of a residency or fellowship program.

UCLA's IMG program, established in 2006, is designed to provide international medical school graduates with professional instruction and clinical training in order to prepare them to pass their medical licensing examinations in the United States. The program specifically targets Spanish-speaking international graduates who commit to practicing medicine in medically underserved communities in California upon licensure where bilingual and bicultural skills are needed.

However, prior to 2013, trainees in UCLA's IMG program were not eligible to provide supervised patient care as part of their training because they were not current medical school students or residents. The trainees were instead placed in approved clinical teaching environments as observers without the ability to directly engage in the practice of medicine. In order to resolve this "gray area," the Legislature established UCLA's IMG program as a pilot program allowing program trainees to receive hands-on clinical instruction under supervision of a physician in a manner effectively identical to instruction received by medical school students and residents.

The IMG pilot program was chaptered with a sunset date of January 1, 2019 subject to the findings of a report required of UCLA regarding the success of the program. This report, issued on December 22, 2017, demonstrated the program's overall effectiveness of the program in providing new adequately trained bilingual, bicultural family medicine physicians to underserved communities in California. The report specifically compares the number of IMG program graduates matching into family medicine in California to other medical school graduates, finding a laudable match rate with greater cultural competency among the program's population.

Recognizing the proven efficacy of UCLA's IMG program, this bill would permanently establish the program in statute and allow the program to continue indefinitely.

Prior Related Legislation. AB 1533 (Mitchell, Chapter 109, Statutes of 2012) originally established UCLA's IMG program as a pilot program.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:

The MBC, a co-sponsor of the bill, argues in support that permanently continuing the pilot program "will benefit the UCLA IMG program, its participants, and California family medicine programs seeking to increase the recruitment of bilingual physicians to their programs." The MBC notes that without the authority provided for under the pilot program, international medical school graduates that engage in supervised patient care activities would be at risk for disciplinary action. The MBC highlights the importance of this hands-on clinical training in ensuring that IMG program participants are adequately prepared to practice in California.

The University of California Office of the President, a co-sponsor of the bill, states that "the continued success of the UCLA program offers longer term benefits for underserved communities throughout the state."

The California Medical Association writes in support that graduates of the UCLA IMG program "will serve as a critical resource to Californians as they continue their medical careers."

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

None on file.

REGISTERED SUPPORT:

Medical Board of California (Sponsor)
University of California Office of the President (Sponsor)
California Medical Association

REGISTERED OPPOSITION:

None on file.

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