

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

No. 2268

H.P. 1458

House of Representatives, March 14, 2024

**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission
Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine to Establish
a Sponsorship Program for International Medical Graduates**

Reported by Representative PERRY of Calais for the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services pursuant to Resolve 2023, chapter 93, section 8.

Reference to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services suggested and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 218.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §12103-B** is enacted to read:

3 **§12103-B. International Medical Graduates Sponsorship Program**

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
5 following terms have the following meanings.

6 A. "Internationally trained physician" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section
7 3271, subsection 8, paragraph A, subparagraph (1).

8 B. "Sponsoring institution" has the same meaning as in Title 32, section 3271,
9 subsection 8, paragraph A, subparagraph (5).

10 **2. Program established.** The International Medical Graduates Sponsorship Program,
11 referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the authority to make
12 grants to sponsoring institutions to provide a pathway to licensure for internationally
13 trained physicians in this State and to expand the number of physicians practicing in Maine
14 physician shortage areas, as defined in Title 32, section 3271, subsection 8, paragraph A,
15 subparagraph (2). The authority shall administer the program in accordance with the
16 requirements of this section.

17 **3. Administration.** Under the program, the authority shall use available funding to
18 establish up to 10 total positions annually at one or more sponsoring institutions for the
19 employment and training of an internationally trained physician issued a limited license to
20 practice medicine pursuant to Title 32, section 3271, subsection 8. The authority shall enter
21 into an agreement with each sponsoring institution that seeks to participate in the program.

22 **4. Application.** An internationally trained physician shall apply directly to each
23 sponsoring institution for placement through the program and the sponsoring institution
24 shall screen each applicant by using an existing process of a rural graduate medical
25 education collaborative in the State.

26 **5. Fund created.** A nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving fund under the jurisdiction
27 of the authority, known as the International Medical Graduates Sponsorship Program Fund
28 and referred to in this subsection as "the fund," is created to carry out the purposes of this
29 section. Any unexpended balance in the fund carries over for continued use under this
30 section. The authority may receive, invest and expend on behalf of the fund money from
31 gifts, grants, bequests and donations or other sources in addition to money appropriated or
32 allocated by the State. Money in the fund must be invested by the authority, as provided
33 by law, with the earned income to be added to the fund. Money received by the authority
34 on behalf of the fund must be used for the purposes of this section.

35 **Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §3271, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

36 **8. Alternative license pathway for internationally trained physician.**
37 Notwithstanding any other requirements of this chapter, the board shall provide a pathway
38 for an internationally trained physician who has been licensed or otherwise authorized to
39 practice medicine in a country other than the United States and who meets the requirements
40 of this subsection to apply for and obtain a full and unrestricted license to practice medicine
41 in this State.

1 A. For the purposes of this subsection, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
2 following terms have the following meanings.

3 (1) "Internationally trained physician" means a physician who has received a
4 degree of doctor of medicine or its equivalent from a legally chartered medical
5 school outside the United States recognized by the World Health Organization or
6 its successor organization; who has been licensed or otherwise authorized to
7 practice medicine in a country other than the United States; who has practiced
8 medicine for at least one year; and who has lived in this State for at least 12 months.

9 (2) "Maine physician shortage area" means a geographic region or population in
10 the State experiencing a shortage of physicians, relative to population and need, as
11 determined by the board.

12 (3) "Medical licensing exam" means the United States Medical Licensing
13 Examination or its successor examination.

14 (4) "Participating health care facility" means a health care facility approved by the
15 board that provides a program for internationally trained physicians according to
16 criteria developed or approved by the board and that provides medical care in a
17 Maine physician shortage area.

18 (5) "Sponsoring institution" means any of the 4 hospitals in this State accredited
19 by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education on January 1, 2024.

20 B. An internationally trained physician may apply for a limited license to practice
21 medicine for a renewable 2-year term if a sponsoring institution and the applicant
22 submit evidence acceptable to the board that the applicant:

23 (1) Is an internationally trained physician;

24 (2) Has a valid certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign
25 Medical Graduates or its successor organization or other credential evaluation
26 service approved by the board, except that the board may waive such certification
27 at its discretion when the applicant is unable to obtain the required documentation;

28 (3) Has achieved a passing score on both Step 1 and Step 2 CK of the medical
29 licensing exam;

30 (4) Has entered into an agreement with the sponsoring institution providing that
31 the participating health care facility shall develop, assess and evaluate the
32 applicant's familiarity with nonclinical skills and standards appropriate for the
33 practice of medicine in the State, according to assessment and evaluation criteria
34 developed or approved by the board;

35 (5) Has agreed to enter a full-time employment relationship with the sponsoring
36 institution after the board issues to the applicant a limited license to practice
37 medicine; and

38 (6) Has satisfied other criteria that may be developed by the board in fulfillment of
39 this subsection.

40 C. A limited license to practice medicine granted by the board under paragraph B may
41 be renewed twice, for a total 6-year period.

