

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1595

As of March 18, 2011

Title: An act relating to graduates of foreign medical schools.

Brief Description: Regarding graduates of foreign medical schools.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Cody, Appleton and Green).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/11, 95-1.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/17/11.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Kathleen Buchli (786-7488)

Background: The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) is responsible for the licensure and discipline of physicians. To become licensed, a physician must meet a variety of qualifications: graduation from a medical school within the United States or Canada; passage of an examination; and completion of two years of postgraduate medical training. The two years of postgraduate training, which includes internships, residencies, and fellowships, must be in a program acceptable to the MQAC. The MQAC only approves programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, or the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Graduates of foreign medical schools, other than those in Canada, must meet all of the requirements as graduates from domestic schools, including the two years of postgraduate medical training. In addition, foreign medical school graduates must pass the examination given by the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates and be able to read, write, speak, understand, and be understood in English.

Summary of Bill: A foreign medical school graduate is exempt from the two-year postgraduate medical training requirement if the student has been admitted as a permanent immigrant to the United States as a person of exceptional ability in the sciences pursuant to the rules of the United States Department of Labor or been issued a permanent immigration visa, received multiple sclerosis certified specialist status from the Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers, and successfully completed at least 24 months of training in multiple

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sclerosis at an educational institution in the United States with an accredited residency program in neurology or rehabilitation.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: MQAC cannot license some candidates because of the current requirements, and this would give MQAC greater flexibility in licensing qualified individuals. Multiple sclerosis is not a specialty that is covered already in current practice. This will increase access to people in Washington State to physicians with multiple sclerosis training. This will improve patient access to multiple sclerosis specialists and allow Washington graduates with this training to stay in the state. The existing pool of neurologists does not address the state's needs.

OTHER: We need to address licensing of foreign graduates, and we support an amendment.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Cody, prime sponsor; Eugene May, National Multiple Sclerosis Society; Cermit Rickey, National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

OTHER: Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.