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FSMB, Intealth, ACGME Establish Advisory Commission to Guide Alternate Pathways for State Licensure of International Medical Graduates

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), Intealth™, and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) announced today they have established a new “Advisory Commission on Alternate Licensing Models” to provide guidance on alternative pathways for state licensure of physicians who have completed training and/or practiced outside of the United States. The majority of these physicians are international medical graduates (IMGs), encompassing both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens who completed their medical education and training outside the United States and Canada.

Approximately one-quarter of the U.S. physician workforce is comprised of IMGs. IMGs are a critical component of the U.S. health care system and help ensure access to care in underserved communities and physician specialties experiencing shortages, especially primary care. Some IMGs entering the U.S. health care system for residency and/or fellowship training have already completed postgraduate training and/or practiced medicine in another country.

Despite substantial increases in U.S. medical school [enrollment](#), steady increases in U.S. graduate medical [education](#), and reports that more than 99% of [U.S. MD](#) and [DO](#) graduates enter training or full-time practice in the United States, [current](#) and [projected](#) physician shortages persist.

There is increasing interest among state policy makers to improve patient access and reduce workforce shortages by changing licensure requirements for physicians who have completed training and/or practiced abroad. Some of these proposals bypass certain requirements, including requirements related to U.S. postgraduate training, that are designed to ensure physicians have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to provide safe and competent patient care. While there are some shared characteristics among the proposals, there are also distinctions that may lead to varying outcomes across states and create confusion among physicians, regulators, and patients. In some cases, it is also unclear how medical boards and regulators will operationalize the proposed pathways.

In response, FSMB, Intealth, and ACGME, together with national organizations representing specialty certification and medical education, are working to develop meaningful recommendations for licensing requirements and pathways for internationally trained and practicing physicians.

This work has begun, and the commission is expected to issue recommendations and guidance, and identify resources for states, in the coming months. We look forward to working with states as they implement these proposals so that we have a consistent approach that protects patients and assures the readiness for these physicians to practice in the American health care system.

About FSMB

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national non-profit organization representing the medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. The FSMB serves as the voice for state medical boards, supporting them through education, assessment, research and

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advocacy while providing services and initiatives that promote patient safety, quality health care and regulatory best practices. The FSMB serves the public through Docinfo.org, a free physician search tool which provides background information on the more than 1 million doctors in the United States. To learn more about the FSMB, visit www.fsmb.org.

About Intealth

Intealth is a private, nonprofit organization that brings together the expertise and resources for advancing quality in health care education worldwide in order to improve health care for all. Through strategic integration of its divisions, ECFMG® and FAIMER®, Intealth offers a flexible and multi-layered portfolio of services. These services enhance and support the education and training of health care professionals, verify their qualifications required to practice, and inform the development of health workforce policies around the world. By leveraging these combined competencies, Intealth powers innovation in areas critical to the health professions. Learn more at www.intealth.org.

About ACGME

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education ([ACGME](http://www.acgme.org)) is an independent, 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization that sets and monitors voluntary professional educational standards essential in preparing physicians to deliver safe, high-quality medical care to all Americans. Graduate medical education (GME) refers to the period of education in a particular specialty (residency) or subspecialty (fellowship) following medical school; the ACGME oversees the accreditation of residency and fellowship programs in the US.

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