

Legislation Introduced to Study Removing Barriers to Practice for Foreign Trained Physicians Living in Maine

March 15, 2023

On Tuesday, March 21st the Maine Legislature's Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services will hold a public hearing on *LD 937 - Resolve, to Establish the Commission Regarding Foreign-trained Physicians Living in Maine*. This bill would establish a commission to look at ways that Maine could help facilitate and support foreign-trained physicians who are living in Maine to use their skills and training as a doctor.



Rep. Kristen Cloutier of Lewiston, prime sponsor of the legislation, states her reasons for introducing this bill:

“There are many qualified physicians living in Maine who have been trained in other countries that are currently unable to practice medicine and support their families here. This bill would be an important first step to explore how we can remove existing barriers and ensure that we are maximizing the skills, training and talents of foreign-trained physicians living in Maine. This will increase the cultural competency of our health care workforce and address the current shortage of medical professionals that we are facing, while allowing those professionals to do the work they love.”

As Maine looks to address its healthcare workforce shortages, one resource it can look to are the foreign-trained physicians who are living in Maine. These are doctors who have gone to medical school, been licensed and have years of practice in their home country who have immigrated to and are living in Maine, many of whom are here as refugees and asylum seekers. For a range of issues, the vast majority are not able to make it through the many steps in the licensing process to get to the point where they are even able to apply to the Maine Board of Licensure in Medicine. This is not a unique situation to Maine but is a national problem.

“During the past couple of years several states from across the country have begun to look at this issue. This year seems like the opportune time for Maine to also explore what steps we can take as a state to help these physicians use their knowledge and skills,” explains Sally Sutton, Program Coordinator for the New Mainers Resource Center, Portland Adult Education. “While we can learn a great deal from other states, it is also important that we take advantage of what we can learn from the doctors who are living in Maine and come together to craft a solution for our state.”

For background information about the issue go to: [Fulfilling Potential: Foreign-Trained Physicians A Pathway Forward for Maine](#).

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