

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R3525 NC-D

S.B. 616
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Health & Human Services
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In a state with significant shortages in a variety of health care professions, El Paso is the least staffed large city in the United States. El Paso faces shortages in physicians, dentists, nurses, and allied health professionals. Furthermore, physicians are not evenly distributed throughout the state. In 2008, El Paso County had only 109.1 direct care physicians per 100,000 people, versus 158.8 per 100,000 people statewide and 214 per 100,000 people nationwide.

In addition to the existing physician shortage, as a result of base realignment and closure in Texas, Fort Bliss will experience a large influx of troops and dependants over the next five years. Growth at Fort Bliss is estimated to be more than 65,000. At the Senate Base Realignment And Closure Committee (BRAC) hearing held in El Paso last year, William Beaumont Army Medical Center staff testified that base realignment and closure alone will require an additional 615 doctors by 2017.

This legislation will help address the physician shortage issue by allowing qualified, out-of-state doctors to obtain Texas medical licenses. As proposed, S.B. 616 provides that the time frame to pass each part of the examination for a license to practice medicine does not apply to an applicant who meets certain requirements, including that the person is licensed and in good standing in another state for at least five years; does not hold a license in the other states that has any restrictions, disciplinary orders, or probation; will practice in a medically underserved area or a health manpower shortage area; and is credentialed by a public hospital, a federal qualified health center, a federally qualified health center look-alike, or a health care center primarily serving uninsured persons.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Medical Board in SECTION 1 (Section 155.051, Occupations Code) and SECTION 2 (Section 155.056, Occupations Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 155.051, Occupations Code, by adding Subsections (d) and (e), as follows:

(d) Provides that the time frame to pass each part of the examination does not apply to an applicant who is licensed and in good standing as a physician in another state; has been licensed for at least five years; does not hold a medical license in the other state that has any restrictions, disciplinary orders, or probation; will practice in a medically underserved area or a health manpower shortage area, as those terms are defined by Section 157.052 (Prescribing at Sites Serving Certain Medically Underserved Populations); and is credentialed by a public hospital, a federally qualified health center, a federally qualified health center look-alike, or a health care center primarily serving uninsured persons.

(e) Authorizes the Texas Medical Board (TMB) by rule to establish a process to verify that a person, after meeting the requirements of Subsection (d), practices only in an area described by Subsection (d)(4).

SECTION 2. Amends Section 155.056, Occupations Code, by adding Subsections (e) and (f), as follows:

(e) Provides that the limitation on examination attempts by an applicant under Subsection (a) does not apply to an applicant who meets certain licensing and medical practice, and credentialing requirements.

(f) Authorizes TMB by rule to establish a process to verify that a person who, after meeting the requirements of Subsection (e), practices only in an area described by Subsection (e)(4) (relating to a medically underserved area or a health manpower shortage area, as those terms are defined by Section 157.052).

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.