

**PRESENTATION OF THE
HAWAII MEDICAL BOARD**

TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2015

Friday, February 13, 2015
1:35 p.m.

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 231, RELATING TO MEDICINE.

TO THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Jone Geimer-Flanders, DO, member of the Hawaii Medical (“Board”).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 231, Relating to Medicine.

The Board had an opportunity to review this bill at its February 12, 2015 meeting, and expressed opposition to this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to clarify that a foreign medical graduate must have passed either: (1) The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (“ECFMG”) qualifying examination on or after 1984; or (2) the Federation Licensing Examination (“FLEX”), the United States Medical Licensing Examination (“USMLE”), a combination of these examinations, or the ECFMG qualifying examination prior to 1984.

As written, the Board opposes this bill for the following reasons:

- The ECFMG qualifying examination (both before and on/after 1984) was **not** a licensing examination; it was only used to fulfill the requirements for the ECFMG Certification. As such, the ECFMG qualifying exam alone should not be accepted as meeting a state’s national licensing examination requirements for medical licensure. It is important to note that the ECFMG does not assess physicians for purposes of licensure.

The ECFMG assesses, through its certification program, whether foreign medical graduates are ready to enter residency or fellowship programs in the United States of America that are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education. ECFMG Certification is a requirement for foreign medical graduates who wish to enter accredited residency/fellowship training programs. It is equally important to note that the ECFMG certifying exams that this bill seeks to recognize were never recognized by any medical licensing authority in the United States for the purpose of meeting their statutory examination requirement for an unrestricted medical license. This bill would make Hawaii the first state to make this recognition.

- The bill seems predicated upon factually incorrect information. Specifically, page 2, lines 3-6, implies that: the FLEX did not exist prior to 1984, and it, therefore, would not have been available to foreign medical graduates. As a point of clarification, the FLEX was first administered in 1968, and from its inception was available to foreign medical graduates. The bill's reference to 1984 relates to changes in content and structure of the FLEX that have led to the delineation between the Old FLEX (1968-1984) and the New FLEX (1985-1993).
- An additional point of note is that the ECFMG certifying exams were not recognized by any federal agency (INS, HHS) for purposes such as employment under the H1-B visa, which required the FLEX or acceptable equivalents (e.g. USMLE).

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 231
Friday, February 13, 2015
Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Senate Bill No. 231, Relating to Medicine.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [HTHTestimony](#)
Cc: pheckathorn@queens.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB231 on Feb 13, 2015 13:35PM
Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2015 6:10:30 PM

SB231

Submitted on: 2/11/2015

Testimony for HTH on Feb 13, 2015 13:35PM in Conference Room 414

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. Leslie Chun	The Queen's Health Systems	Comments Only	No

Comments: SB 231, Relating to Medicine Senate Committee on Health Hearing— February 13, 2015 at 1:35 PM Dear Chairman Green and Members of the Senate Committee on Health: My name is Dr. Leslie Chun and I am a Vice President and the Chief Quality Officer at The Queen’s Health Systems. We would like to provide comments relating to SB 231 in order to outline some of our concerns with this legislation. Under current law, foreign medical graduates seeking licensure to practice in Hawaii must: • Pass the Federal Licensing Examination (FLEX) or the U.S. Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) or a board approved combination; • Pass the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) qualifying examination prior to 1984; and • Have at least three years of medical training or experience in a hospital approved by the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association for internship or residency. As written, this legislation would amend current law in order to allow individuals who have passed only the ECFMG qualifying examination to be eligible for licensure in Hawaii. It is important to note that the ECFMG qualifying examination is not, nor ever was, considered a licensing examination. Instead, the ECFMG examination has traditionally been used to certify whether a foreign medical graduate is ready to enter into a residency or fellowship program approved by the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education. This legislation, as written, would allow individuals who have only passed the ECFMG qualifying examinations to gain an unrestricted license to practice in the state of Hawaii. This proposed legislation would make us the only state in the nation to allow foreign medical graduates to practice without completing a recognized licensing examination. We would ask that your committee maintain the law as written in order to keep Hawaii’s licensing requirement for foreign medical graduates consistent with national standards. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email

webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov