

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:34 p.m.
Conference Room 225 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 1243, RELATING TO FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES**

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Fukunaga, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawaii Medical Board (Board). The Board offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow foreign medical school graduates applying for a license to practice medicine and surgery to substitute one year of required medical training or experience in a hospital with one year of fellowship training where the parent program or hospital is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

While the Board has not had the opportunity to review this bill, the Board supports the intent of this measure to amend Hawaii Revised Statutes section 453-4.5, to amended language related to alternative pathways of licensure requirements for foreign medical graduates.

For the Committee's information, the Board will review this bill at its next publicly noticed meeting on February 13, 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 PM
Via Video Conference; Conference Room 225

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: **Comments on SB 1243
Relating to Foreign Medical Graduates**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

HPH supports the intent of and provides the following COMMENTS on SB 1243 which allows foreign medical school graduates applying for a license to practice medicine and surgery to substitute one year of required medical training or experience in a hospital with one year of fellowship training where the parent program or hospital is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

Allowing the substitution of one year of medical training in a hospital for one year of fellowship training where the parent program or hospital is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education may permit foreign medical school graduates to become licensed professionals and enter the health care workforce sooner. A residency program is entered into after graduation from medical school and lasts between 2-4 years, depending on the specialty the resident is training in, and is often performed in a hospital setting. A fellowship, on the other hand, is done after the completion of a residency program and involves additional specialized training under a more experienced physician. The purposes and objectives of residency and fellowship training are similar. Both programs aim to prepare doctors for future full-fledged medical practice.

Recent data reported in the Physician Workforce Report of 2023 shows that of the more than 12,000 licensed physicians in Hawai'i only 3,599 are currently providing patient care to Hawai'i's population. Further, of those practicing, not all physicians practice fulltime. Thus these 3,599 individuals provide approximately 3,022 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) of active patient care. Moreover, Hawai'i faces a physician shortage of nearly 800

physicians when compared to the Continental United States. Therefore, the flexibility to substitute types of accredited training may ease the path to licensure and has the potential of allowing much needed physicians to practice in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-1243

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:50:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this proposal. This is a prime example of lowering the expected standards to fill slots.

LATE

SB-1243

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:55:27 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Zimmer	Testifying for World Education Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) are well positioned to assist states meet workforce shortages - particularly in underserved areas with physician shortages. State reforms, like that in SB 1243, are an important step in reducing barriers to entry to for IMGs. The addition fellowship training as substitute for approved hospital or medical training is a meaningful improvement to the current IMG pathway in Hawaii.