

Support the Physician Pathway Act

An Act Improving Healthcare Delivery for Underserved Residents
of the Commonwealth

[S.1402](#) (Sen. Jason Lewis) and [H.2224](#) (Reps. Jack Lewis & Mindy Domb)

The Physician Pathway Act would address acute physician shortages in rural and underserved communities by mobilizing the expertise of experienced internationally-trained physicians (ITPs). This legislation would create a streamlined pathway to full licensure for qualified ITPs in exchange for at least three years of medical practice in a healthcare facility serving state residents with the greatest need, as recommended by the Massachusetts Special Commission on Foreign-Trained Medical Professionals in [its 2022 report](#).



According to the Report:

Rural and low-income residents face critical shortages in primary care physicians, especially in western and southeastern Massachusetts.

Though Massachusetts has the highest physician-to-patient ratio in the country, nearly 40% of our physicians practice in Suffolk county, which holds just 11.4% of our population. Just 20% of our physicians provide primary care, and only 6% practice in community health centers.

Internationally-trained physicians testify before the Joint Committee on Public Health in October 2017

Internationally-trained physicians are an untapped healthcare resource. Our state's complex and costly licensing requirements require established physicians, often with years of experience, to repeat their postgraduate clinical training, competing with recent medical school graduates for a finite number of slots. As a result, a significant number of our Commonwealth's ITPs are unable to practice their profession, especially those who arrive through non-traditional avenues. Often refugees or other immigrants fleeing persecution or political turmoil, these physicians are both qualified and motivated to work with underserved state residents, giving back to the communities that welcomed them.

THE SOLUTION: The Physician Pathway Act would:

- ✓ Allow qualified ITPs to be issued a renewable 1-year limited license to practice medicine under the mentorship of a participating federally-qualified or other community health center or hospital, followed by a renewable 2-year restricted license to practice in a shortage area or specialty designated by the Board of Registration in Medicine, before being eligible for full licensure.
- ✓ Require ITPs to fulfill all examination and credentialing requirements currently mandated for full licensure in Massachusetts, ensuring the highest standards of patient care.
- ✓ Increase the supply of qualified physicians in underserved regions of Massachusetts.
- ✓ Establish Massachusetts as a national leader in innovative strategies that marshal the skills of internationally-trained physicians to address the growing demand for primary care physicians.

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