



# ADAM SMITH

WASHINGTON'S 9TH DISTRICT

## International Medical Graduates Assistance Act Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09)

**Background:** A study in 2019 by the Migration Policy Institute found that 21% of internationally trained immigrants were underemployed.<sup>1</sup> This leaves highly-educated, skilled workers in jobs that do not fully exercise their hard-earned skill and expertise, earning lower wages than similarly U.S.- educated peers. Meanwhile, key sectors of the U.S. economy face growing shortages and can struggle to find skilled workers capable of taking on those jobs. In health care in particular, the Association of American Medical Colleges project a possible shortage of up to 48,000 primary care physicians by 2034.<sup>2</sup>

International medical graduates (IMGs) complete their training overseas at credible and respected medical schools, but with the exception of Canada, cannot immediately apply for the U.S. Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE). The cost of licensing, test preparation, supportive classes (e.g. clinical experience, English as a Second Language classes), and certification fees often makes obtaining a U.S. medical license out of reach for many IMGs who also need to pay bills or support their families. These individuals have gone through rigorous training to become medical professionals and are ready to join the workforce if given the chance.

**The International Medical Graduates Assistance Act** would help alleviate the challenges that IMGs face in obtaining a U.S. medical license by:

- Incentivizing states to create temporary licensing programs for internationally educated immigrants with medical degrees to allow them to practice under supervision while they complete the necessary training and certification for a U.S. medical license;
- Establishing guaranteed medical residency slots for IMGs in the state program to practice in predominantly medically underserved communities; and
- Providing grants to help cover the cost of exam preparation, testing, certification, ESL classes, and case management for IMGs in need of financial assistance.

The IMG Assistance Act incentivizes and supports immigrants entering the health care field to help reverse the trend of brain waste in our country and ensure quality, accessible, and culturally competent care is available for all.

**Endorsing Organizations:** Afghan Cultural Society, Arkansas United, California Immigrants Resources Center, Chemeketa Community College, Chemeketa Community College, Cicero Institute, Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS), Global Cleveland, IMPRINT Coalition, International Community Health Services, International Institute of Buffalo, Jewish Family Service of San Diego, La Casa de Amistad, Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains, Médicos Unidos Venezuela-USA chapter, Nashi Immigrants Health Board, National Immigration Forum, National Skills Coalition, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, One Refugee, OneAmerica, Pars Equality Center, Los Angeles, Portland Refugee Support Group, Restore Education, RUSA

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<sup>1</sup> Jeanne Batalova & Michael Fix, [Leaving Money on the Table: The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants](#), Migration Policy Institute (June 2021)

<sup>2</sup> [The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections from 2019 to 2034](#), IHS Markit Ltd., Association of American Medical Colleges (June 2021)



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LGBTQ, Sea Mar Community Health Center, Seattle Indian Health Board, Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning, Synergy Texas, Talent Beyond Boundaries, The Refugee Advocacy Lab, The Welcoming Center, Tiyya Foundation, Upwardly Global, US Together Inc., WA Allied Health Center of Excellence, Welcome Back Initiative, Welcoming City, and World Education Services.