



Physicians Caring for Texans

House Public Health Committee
Written Testimony Against House Bill 1340
Gary Floyd, MD, President
Texas Medical Association
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Chairwoman Klick and members of the House Public Health Committee, I am Gary Floyd, MD, a pediatrician from Corpus Christi, and president of the Texas Medical Association. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to House Bill 1340 on behalf of TMA, which has a membership of more than 57,000 physicians and medical students.

TMA opposes HB 1340 because Texas does not need to lower medical licensing standards to recruit physicians. Texas recently joined the Interstate Medical Licensing Compact which provides an expedited licensing pathway, and the state already has a special medical license for underserved areas. Importantly, Texas is licensing *historic* numbers of new physicians. Further, TMA opposes a lower licensing standard for Texans who live in areas that are underserved.

This bill lowers Texas' medical licensing standards by removing several requirements for a full medical license specified in state law, including:

- Completion of at least one year of postgraduate training from an accredited residency program;
- No limit on the number of attempts at passage of an accepted medical licensing exam; and
- No limit on the length of time for passage of an accepted medical licensing exam.

It concedes these requirements to whatever might have been in place at the time the physician obtained his or her medical license in another state, which varies among states. It further reduces medical licensing requirements by waiving passage of the Texas Medical License Jurisprudence Exam.

With respect, we encourage the committee to consider the following questions as you deliberate the necessity of this bill:

Who are the ex-military physicians this bill is designed to serve and why can they not meet current Texas medical licensing requirements? What licensing barriers are preventing them from attaining licensing in Texas?

Why are certain medical licensing requirements being waived in this bill? Are they only important for some Texans but not all? Should the state legislate a lower standard for Texans who live in medically underserved areas?

We do not believe the bill is necessary, considering:

- In March 2022, Texas joined the Interstate Medical Licensing Compact. Physicians licensed in good standing in other states – including military physicians – can qualify for medical licensing in an expedited manner through the compact; and
- Texas already has a [medical license limited to underserved areas](#). If an ex-military physician cannot qualify for a full medical license because he or she cannot meet the required medical licensing exam timeframe, this provisional license is available for those licensed in another state for at least five years who practice in an underserved area and meet certain criteria.
- If an ex-military physician is not able to meet the requirements for a full Texas medical license for other reasons, such as too many attempts to pass the required medical licensing exam, Texas law already has alternative options for overcoming this barrier (Section 155.0561 Occupations Code).

Why should the Texas Medical Jurisprudence Exam be waived for any physician practicing in the state?

Also please consider:

Military physicians may have practiced in any state in the country and have no familiarity with the Texas Medical Practice Act. This exam was created to protect the public and physicians. TMA believes it is imperative for a physician practicing in the state to know relevant state laws and administrative rules; TMA does not support waiver of this exam.

Medicine is united in the belief that no matter where you live in Texas you deserve the highest level of medical care. I am proud to say that Texas has done an amazing job in growing our physician workforce. Our state is viewed as a good place to practice medicine.

Please also consider:

- Texas grew its physician workforce at a faster rate than the state’s population over the past 10 years. In fact, the total number of physicians grew at 2.5 times the population rate and primary care physicians grew at double the rate of population gains.
- For the last fiscal year, **over 7,000 physicians** applied for and 6,600 were granted a Texas medical license. Both were historic numbers. For context, 21 U.S. states and the District of Columbia each have fewer than 6,600 total physicians.
- From fiscal year 2021 to 2022, the number of newly licensed physicians increased by 1,300 or 24%, from 5,300 newly licensed in FY 21 to 6,600 newly licensed in FY 22. This is the second highest year-over-year numerical increase for newly licensed in Texas in 40 years.
- Even the most underserved areas of the state are seeing more physicians. The number of primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) dropped from 168 in 2014 to 119 in 2022, a **29.2% drop**. This drop occurred because new primary care physicians were recruited to the 49 Texas counties that lost their HPSA designation since 2014.

We respectfully ask that you consider these factors as you weigh your position on HB 1340. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill on behalf of TMA members.