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JB PRITZKER
Governor

MARIO TRETO, JR.
Secretary

STEVEN JOHNSON
Public Information Officer

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Contact: Steven Johnson
Steven.Johnson3@Illinois.gov

IDFPR Helps Position Illinois at the Forefront of Expanding its Healthcare Workforce With First License Issued Through the State's New International Medical Graduate Pathway

Today marks a major milestone for the Pritzker Administration as it continues its strong commitment to expanding and strengthening Illinois' healthcare workforce.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) Division of Professional Regulation issued the very first license under a new pathway that will allow internationally trained physicians to provide care to the people of Illinois.

"Today marks the beginning of what we hope will become the standard among states in not only alleviating the strain being caused by healthcare staffing shortages but also lead to a greater appreciation of the tremendous contributions immigrants make every day to the state and the country," said **IDFPR Secretary Mario Treto, Jr.**

As [announced](#) last September, the International Medical Graduate (IMG) licensure pathway gives trained, qualified, healthcare professionals the opportunity to practice medicine in Illinois under the supervision of a fully licensed physician at an approved institution for a period of two years.

Upon successful completion of the two-year supervised period, IMGs may then apply for an International Medical Graduate Restricted License, which will allow them more independence to practice within an area that has been designated to have a shortage of health professionals. IMGs are then eligible to apply for a full Illinois medical license after two years of practicing under the International Medical Graduate Restricted License.

"The Illinois State Medical Society congratulates the IDFPR on the issuance of the first license under this new pathway to medical licensure for a foreign-educated physician," said **Richard C. Anderson, M.D., President of the Illinois State Medical Society**. "We see this as an important step towards addressing the physician shortage issue in Illinois. We stand ready to work with the state to promote this new licensure pathway, and to encourage qualified foreign-educated physicians to consider Illinois as a welcoming place to practice medicine."

Addressing the shortfall in qualified healthcare professionals to meet the growing demands of patients has been a priority both in Illinois and across the country that is only projected to worsen in the coming years.

As many as 47 states are estimated to have a shortage of primary care physicians by the year 2037, according to nonprofit health care policy organization the [National Institute for Health Care Management Foundation](#), with rural areas expected to experience up to a 60% shortage of physicians. By 2036, the U.S. could face a shortage of up to 86,000 physicians, according to the [Association of American Medical Colleges](#).

As of Dec. 31, more than 3.6 million Illinois residents reportedly lived in an area where there were 3,500 or more patients for every one health care provider, according to statistics from the U.S Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration.

The first professional to receive licensure under the state's International Medical Graduate pathway is an anesthesiologist employed at Kidney Care Center in Joliet.

Kidney Care Center Chief Medical Officer Dr. Mohammad Shafi said having the IMG licensure pathway was a meaningful opportunity to strengthen their physician workforce while upholding the highest standards of clinical quality and oversight.

"In nephrology, where demand for specialty care continues to outpace supply, we cannot afford to lose highly trained physicians who are ready and qualified to serve but face licensing barriers," Shafi said. "This pathway allows us to responsibly expand access to care, reduce delays for patients with complex chronic conditions, and preserve continuity of treatment. When implemented with rigorous credentialing, structured supervision, and clear quality benchmarks, it ensures that patient safety and outcomes remain paramount while preventing the loss of valuable medical talent in our health care system."

For more information on IDFPR's progress to strengthen Illinois' healthcare workforce, visit the Department's [Hub webpage](#).