



Institutional Licensure in Support of Exemplary Physicians Ineligible by Regular Criteria for Licensure in Georgia

Academic Health Centers (ACHs) advance sciences in their states and the nation through recruitment – which now is increasingly global – of outstanding clinical scientists and educators.

Georgia Regents University (GRU) is the state’s only public academic health center, one of only 80 such institutions nationally – a large and critical business enterprise, including a health system and a research & innovation hub.

GRU has been tasked by the Governor and Board of Regents to build and sustain an AHC positioned to compete on a national and international stage. This requires key recruitments of the most talented physicians and scientists from across the world. Over the next 5-8 years, GRU is committed to doubling NIH funding, recruiting 100 additional researchers, and increasing our economic impact through enhanced biomedical research.

- GRU’s continued development will ensure the growth of a major state economic engine, as one of Georgia’s top 20 employers and our region’s 2nd largest employer, the GRU enterprise has a state-wide economic impact of greater than \$12 billion on a budget of \$1 billion, bringing in over \$100 million in medical tourism dollars. GRU’s own return on investment exceeds \$50 for every dollar of state appropriations provided.
- GRU is a major research engine bringing in \$90 million in research grant dollars.
- NIH funding at GRU increased – 90% over the last decade, compared with only a 50% increase in the overall NIH budget over the same time period.
- GRU now ranks #1 in the Southeast, #1 in Georgia and #6 in the nation in American Heart Association research funding.

Bringing stellar research clinicians to Georgia is integral to GRU’s and the state’s strategic growth

The opportunity would include, with input, support, and direction from the Georgia Composite Medical Board, a revision of its rules to expand the issuance of restricted institutional licenses to physicians employed at GRU, and an expansion of Georgia law to enhance this licensure option. This initiative would enable world renowned faculty physicians to practice, teach and perform research at Georgia AHC’s including GRU, while maintaining quality physician standards and protecting patient safety for Georgians and respecting the integrity of the Georgia Composite Medical Board as sole arbiter of medical licensure in the State of Georgia

State Initiatives Offer Restricted Licenses for Exemplary International Faculty Physicians

Physicians applying for independent licensure in a state must have completed an appropriate United States (U.S.) residency and eligibility is determined based upon adequacy of training and prior professional experiences. Doctors trained abroad who want to practice medicine in the U.S. have to undergo a rigorous screening and training process, including passing all of the same exams and meeting all the requirements as those who get their degrees in this country.

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) constitute 25% of the physician workforce and resident population in the U.S. (“Evaluating the Quality of Care Provided by Graduates of International Medical Schools”, U.S. Health Care Workforce, 2010)



Because foreign trained physician scientists complete their training outside the U.S., they often do not qualify for full medical licensure.

- Presently, overseas distinguished physicians are ineligible and unable to obtain full Georgia licensure and, accordingly, are unable to practice in Georgia.
- In a global scientific community, this puts Georgia at a disadvantage because stellar academic clinicians are recruited to other states, where they can obtain an institutional license, instead of Georgia.
- The present situation is therefore severely hampers GRU and Georgia's ability to recruit stellar, foreign-trained scientists.
- This disadvantage is most pressing in light of expectations that Georgia's academic institutions advance clinical and translational research.

Georgia law presently enables the Georgia Composite Medical board in its discretion to grant joint institutional licenses to physicians trained abroad in exceptional circumstances; however, the law and Board rules as written are not tailored to enable meaningful use of this licensing mechanism. To allow our state to compete on equal footing, ideally, Georgia law and Board rules would require revision. The definition of "institution" needs to be expanded to include academic health centers and the "exceptional circumstances" requirement needs to be eliminated so that the Board may grant such restricted licenses to faculty physician scientists employed by GRU and other AHCs. Also, international (non-U.S.) residency training acceptable to the Board should not be a bar to licensure.

Nearly every other state in the nation with an academic health center also has a state law that facilitates limited or institutional licensure authorizing physicians to practice at AHCs. Notably, all of Georgia's neighboring states, including Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee afford limited clinical licensure in an academic context enabling faculty recruitment at AHCs. Physicians who obtain these licenses, while trained outside the U.S., have exemplary medical training and possess other accomplishments (scientific, educational, advocacy) to show that their profession holds them in high esteem.

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