

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2709

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for career support for skilled internationally educated health professionals.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 10, 2015

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants for career support for skilled internationally educated health professionals.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Professional’s Access
5 To Health Workforce Integration Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. CAREER SUPPORT FOR SKILLED, INTERNATION-**
7 **ALLY EDUCATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

9 (1) According to the Association of Schools of
10 Public Health, projections indicate a nationwide

1 shortage of up to 250,000 public health workers
2 needed by 2020.

3 (2) Similar trends are projected for other health
4 professions indicating shortages across disciplines,
5 including within the fields of nursing (500,000 by
6 2025), dentistry (15,000 by 2025), pharmacy
7 (38,000 by 2030), mental and behavioral health, pri-
8 mary care (46,000 by 2025), and community and al-
9 lied health.

10 (3) A nationwide health workforce shortage will
11 result in serious health threats and more severe and
12 costly health care needs, due to, in part, a delayed
13 response to food-borne outbreaks, emerging infec-
14 tious diseases, natural disasters, fewer cancer
15 screenings, and delayed treatment.

16 (4) Vulnerable and underserved populations and
17 health professional shortage areas will be most se-
18 verely impacted by the health workforce shortage.

19 (5) According to the Migration Policy Institute,
20 over 2,000,000 college-educated immigrants in the
21 United States today are unemployed or under-
22 employed in low- or semi-skilled jobs that fail to
23 draw on their education and expertise.

1 (6) Approximately 2 out of every 5 internation-
2 ally educated immigrants are unemployed or under-
3 employed.

4 (7) According to Drexel University Center for
5 Labor Markets and Policy, underemployment for
6 internationally educated immigrant women is 28 per-
7 cent higher than for their male counterparts.

8 (8) According to the Drexel University Center
9 for labor markets and policy, the mean annual earn-
10 ings of underemployed immigrants were \$32,000, or
11 43 percent less than United States born college
12 graduates employed in the college labor market.

13 (9) According to Upwardly Global and the Wel-
14 come Back Initiative, with proper guidance and sup-
15 port, underemployed skilled immigrants typically in-
16 crease their income by 215 percent to 900 percent.

17 (10) According to the Brookings Institution and
18 the Partnership for a New American Economy, im-
19 migrants working in the health workforce are, on av-
20 erage, better educated than United States-born
21 workers in the health workforce.

22 (b) GRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—

23 (1) AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE GRANTS.—The
24 Secretary of Health and Human Services acting
25 through the Bureau of Health Workforce within the

1 Health Resources and Services Administration, the
2 National Institute on Minority Health and Health
3 Disparities, or the Office of Minority Health (in this
4 section referred to as the “Secretary”) may award
5 grants to eligible entities to carry out activities de-
6 scribed in subsection (c).

7 (2) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a
8 grant under this section, an entity shall—

9 (A) be a clinical, public health, or health
10 services organization, a community-based or
11 nonprofit entity, an academic institution, a
12 faith-based organization, a State, county, or
13 local government, an Area Health Education
14 Center, or another entity determined appro-
15 priate by the Secretary; and

16 (B) submit to the Secretary an application
17 at such time, in such manner, and containing
18 such information as the Secretary may require.

19 (c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—A grant awarded
20 under this section shall be used—

21 (1) to provide services to assist unemployed and
22 underemployed skilled immigrants, residing in the
23 United States, who have legal, permanent work au-
24 thorization and who are internationally educated
25 health professionals, enter into the American health

1 workforce with employment matching their health
2 professional skills and education, and advance in em-
3 ployment to positions that better match their health
4 professional education and expertise;

5 (2) to provide training opportunities to reduce
6 barriers to entry and advancement in the health
7 workforce for skilled, internationally educated immi-
8 grants;

9 (3) to educate employers regarding the abilities
10 and capacities of internationally educated health
11 professionals;

12 (4) to assist in the evaluation of foreign creden-
13 tials; and

14 (5) to facilitate access to contextualized and ac-
15 celerated courses on English as a second language.

16 (d) DEFINITION.—In this section:

17 (1) The term “health professional” means an
18 individual trained for employment or intended em-
19 ployment in the field of public health, health man-
20 agement, dentistry, health administration, medicine,
21 nursing, pharmacy, psychology, social work, psychi-
22 atry, other mental and behavioral health, allied
23 health, community health or wellness work, including
24 fitness and nutrition, or other fields as determined
25 appropriate by the Secretary.

1 (2) The term “underemployed” means being
2 employed at less skilled tasks than an employee’s
3 training or abilities would otherwise permit.

4 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
5 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
6 such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years
7 2016 through 2020.

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