



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Olympia, Washington 98504

**NOTICE OF ADOPTION
INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT**

Title of Interpretive Statement: Requiring the Filing of a Practice Agreement Before Beginning to Practice Under an IMG Limited License | INS2021-01

Issuing Entity: Washington Medical Commission

Subject Matter: Timing to submit a practice agreement for an International Medical Graduate Limited License

Effective Date: November 19, 2021

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Interpretive Statement



WASHINGTON
**Medical
Commission**
Licensing. Accountability. Leadership.

Title:	Requiring the Filing of a Practice Agreement Before Beginning to Practice Under an IMG Limited License	INS2021-01
References:	RCW 18.71.095(6)	
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Effective Date:	November 19, 2021	
Approved By:	John Maldon, Chair (signature on file)	

The Washington Medical Commission (Commission) interprets [RCW 18.71.095\(6\)](#) to require an international medical graduate (IMG) seeking a limited license under [RCW 18.71.095\(6\)](#) to file a practice agreement with the Commission before beginning the practice of medicine in the state of Washington.

In 2021, the Legislature passed Substitute House Bill ([SHB 1129](#) amending [RCW 18.71.095](#) to create a limited license to practice medicine for international medical graduates who meet certain requirements. [RCW 18.71.095\(6\)](#) establishes the following requirements for an international medical graduate to obtain a limited license:

(6)(a) Upon nomination by the chief medical officer of any hospital, appropriate medical practice located in the state of Washington, the department of social and health services, the department of children, youth, and families, the department of corrections, or a county or city health department, the commission may issue a limited license to an international medical graduate if the applicant:

- (i) Has been a Washington state resident for at least one year;
- (ii) Provides proof the applicant is certified by the educational commission for foreign medical graduates;
- (iii) Has passed all steps of the United States medical licensing examination; and
- (iv) Submits to the commission background check process required of applicants generally.

(b) A license holder under this subsection may only practice:

- (i) Under the supervision and control of a physician who is licensed in this state under chapter 18.71 or 18.57 RCW and is of the same or substantially similar clinical specialty; and
- (ii) Within the nominating facility or organization.

(c) A license holder must file with the commission a practice agreement between the license holder and the supervising physician who is of the same or substantially similar clinical specialty.

(d) A supervising physician may supervise no more than two license holders under this subsection unless the commission grants a request to increase this limit.

(e) A limited license issued under this subsection is valid for two years and may be renewed once by the commission upon application for renewal by the nominating entity.

(f) All persons licensed under this subsection are subject to the jurisdiction of the commission to the same extent as other members of the medical profession, in accordance with this chapter and chapter 18.130 RCW.

(g) Persons applying for licensure and renewing licenses under this subsection shall comply with administrative procedures, administrative requirements, and fees determined as provided in RCW 43.70.250 and 43.70.280.

(h) The supervising physician shall retain professional and personal responsibility for any act which constitutes the practice of medicine as defined in RCW 18.71.011 or the practice of osteopathic medicine and surgery as defined in RCW 18.57.001 when performed by an international medical graduate practicing under their supervision. The supervising physician must hold medical malpractice insurance for any malpractice claim against an international medical graduate practicing under their supervision.

[RCW 18.71.095\(6\)\(c\)](#) requires that the international medical graduate “file with the commission a practice agreement between the license holder and the supervising physician who is of the same or substantially similar clinical specialty.” The statute does not state *when* the practice agreement must be filed with the Commission.

Since the Commission must review the practice agreement to determine whether the supervision requirements are met in order to determine whether the nominating entity meets the requirements to supervise an international medical graduate, the practice agreement must be filed with the Commission *before* the international medical graduate begins practicing under the limited license.

The Washington Medical Commission interprets [RCW 18.71.095\(6\)](#) to require an international medical graduate seeking a limited license under [RCW 18.71.095\(6\)](#) to file a practice agreement with the Commission before beginning the practice of medicine in the state of Washington.