

Date of Hearing: April 1, 2014

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Das Williams, Chair  
AB 2232 (Gray) – As Introduced: February 21, 2014

SUBJECT: University of California: medical education.

SUMMARY: Would appropriate funding to the University of California (UC) to support the UC Merced Programs in Medical Education Program (PRIME) and a study of the creation of a permanent medical school at UC Merced. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Finds and declares that the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will result in millions of previously uninsured Californians seeking health services, resulting in a projected physician shortfall of 17,000 by 2015; the San Joaquin Valley faces health care access 31% lower than the rest of the state and many regions are designated Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs); funding the UC Merced Program in Medical Education (PRIME) is key to meeting the region's needs.
- 2) Appropriates \$1,855,000 from the General Fund to UC each fiscal year, commencing with the 2015-16 fiscal year, for allocation to the UC San Joaquin Valley PRIME to admit up to 12 students per year and operate the program with up to 48 participants from across the four-year curriculum.
- 3) Appropriates \$1,000,000 from the General Fund to UC to support a two-year planning effort geared toward the establishment of a traditional medical school at UC Merced. UC would be required to submit a report to the Legislature by March 1, 2016 regarding planning efforts and recommendations for infrastructure, personnel, and funding necessary for creation.

FISCAL EFFECT: At least \$2,855,000 from the General Fund in direct appropriations to support the programs outlined in this bill.

COMMENTS: Background. Currently, UC operates 18 health professional schools and programs; six are medical schools (Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, and San Francisco). In 2012-13, total enrollment in UC medical schools was approximately 3,000 medical students and more than 4,000 medical residents and fellows.

UC PRIME is a training program focused on meeting the needs of California's underserved populations in both rural communities and urban areas by combining specialized coursework, structured clinical experiences, advanced independent study and mentoring. UC Irvine launched the first UC PRIME program in 2004 focusing on the growing needs of California's Latino communities. Three other UC schools (Davis, San Diego and San Francisco) admitted their first classes in fall 2007 in programs focused on rural health and telemedicine (Davis), health equity (San Diego), and the urban underserved (San Francisco). In 2008, UCLA launched its PRIME program, training physicians to proactively address the needs of diverse disadvantaged communities by delivering culturally competent clinical care, providing leadership for health delivery systems and conducting research on health disparities.

UC Merced currently offers degrees in fields that satisfy medical school preparatory requirements and is developing plans intended to lead to a School of Medicine. In 2011, UC Merced opened a PRIME program in partnership with the UC Davis School of Medicine and UCSF focused the health needs of the San Joaquin Valley.

Purpose of this bill. According to the author, "despite its numerous benefits for the region PRIME lacks an ongoing source of funding for its current enrollment as well as the financial resources to expand capacity to meet the needs of the valley. Additionally, state support is vital to the continued expansion of the campus of UC Merced and to lay the foundation of a new UC Medical School."

Evaluation of new programs. Prior to 2011, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) was charged with reviewing and making recommendations regarding proposals for new programs at California's public colleges and universities. Specifically, CPEC's review was intended to determine whether the costs of a program are justified by societal need and student demand for that program. Since the de-funding of CPEC in 2011, no additional state program reviews have occurred. The Legislature is now placed in the position of examining and reviewing the academic, programmatic, and fiscal implications of new programs.

UC Position. UC has not taken a position on this bill; however, UC has indicated that based on the current status of UC Merced, it is a higher priority to build the general campus rather than develop a medical program. UC notes that accreditation by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) is required for all Doctor of Medicine programs and that the resources required for accreditation standards are considerable. Based on the experience with the UC Riverside medical school, UC does not believe that LCME would accredit UC Merced for a medical program without a significant financial contribution UC indicates that this proposal lies outside of budget priorities established by the Regents in November 2013.

Related legislation. SB 841 (Cannella), as introduced, was identical to this bill but was amended by the Senate Education Committee to remove the appropriation and accompanying language in support of planning for a medical school.

Prior legislation. SB 21 (Roth), Chapter 203, Statutes of 2014, requested the School of Medicine at UC Riverside develop a program, consistent with its mission, in conjunction with the health facilities of its medical residency programs, to identify eligible medical residents and to assist those medical residents to apply for physician retention programs, as specified.

The 2013 Budget Act approved trailer bill language that requires UC to allocate \$15 million for planning and startup costs associated with academic programs to be offered by the School of Medicine at UC Riverside, and trailer bill language that requires regular reporting on a variety of metrics, including funding, recruitment, hiring, and outcomes, as well as operating and capital budgets detailed by fund source.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Medical Association  
California Primary Care Association

California Psychiatric Association

Opposition

None on file.

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