

Date of Hearing: August 6, 2013

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Das Williams, Chair
SB 21 (Roth) – As Amended: August 5, 2013

SENATE VOTE: 39-0

SUBJECT: University of California: UC Riverside Medical School.

SUMMARY: Requests the School of Medicine at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) to 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 in applying for physician retention programs, including, but not limited to, the Steven M. Thompson Physician Corps Loan Repayment Program; and lists a variety of legislative findings and declarations.

EXISTING LAW: Section 9, Article IX of the California State Constitution creates the University of California to be administered by the UC Regents with full powers of organization and government. Additionally, Section 1, Article IV vests legislative powers in the California Legislature which consists of the Senate and Assembly and empowers the Legislature with the ability to appropriate funds with a two-thirds vote, except the budget bill and bills appropriating funds for public schools.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This measure is keyed non-fiscal by the Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS: Background. The foundation of the School of Medicine at UCR dates to 1974, when the UCR/UCLA Thomas Haider Program in Biomedical Sciences was established. This program has enabled approximately 700 students to complete their first two years of medical school at UCR and their last two years at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, which confers their medical degrees.

Timeline of events. In May 2006, UCR proposed to establish an independent four-year School of Medicine that would serve the medically underserved in the Inland Empire. In July 2008, the UC Board of Regents officially approved establishment of a School of Medicine at UCR, which paved the road for the state's first new public medical school in more than four decades. In the summer of 2011, UCR failed to gain accreditation for an independent four-year medical school from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the national accrediting body for educational programs leading to the Medical Doctor degree in the United States and Canadian medical schools. LCME withheld preliminary accreditation due to a lack of recurring state funding support for the school.

In April 2012, after securing substantial new funding from a variety of non-state funding sources, UCR submitted a second accreditation application. In June 2012, a second accreditation site visit took place and in October 2012, UCR received notification that its planned medical school received "preliminary accreditation." Preliminary accreditation from LCME enables prospective students to begin applying to the UCR School of Medicine in order to potentially enroll in the inaugural class in August 2013.

2013 Budget Act and Higher Education Budget Trailer bill. Assembly Bill 110 (Chapter 20, Statutes of 2013), contains a \$2.8 billion General Fund appropriation for the support and operations of the UC. Additionally, the Higher Education Trailer bill (AB 94, Chapter 50, Statutes of 2013) contains other statutory changes to implement agreements reached in constructing the 2013 Budget.

AB 94, section 16, specifies that of the amount appropriated in the UC budget item, the sum of \$15 million is allocated to the UC Regents for the UCR School of Medicine. AB 94 further clarifies that the \$15 million is available for planning and startup costs associated with academic programs offered by the UCR School of Medicine, including ongoing operational support. Finally, AB 94 requires the UC to report annually by April 1, progress reports, as specified, pertaining to funding, recruitment, hiring, and outcomes for the UCR School of Medicine.

California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC). Prior to 2011, CPEC was charged, among other things, with reviewing proposals for new academic and vocational programs at California's public colleges and universities and with making recommendations to the Legislature and Governor. In 2008, CPEC found that the UC proposal to establish a School of Medicine at the Riverside campus fully met the Commission's Guidelines for Approval of New Programs. It was also recommended UC consider establishing the medical school at a later date when the state's economic and fiscal conditions are more favorable.

Need for the bill. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, the Inland Empire is the fastest-growing region of the state. The Inland Empire of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties has a population larger than the state of Oregon. With the expectation of the Affordable Care Act to be fully implemented in 2015, it is estimated that more than 300,000 residents of the Inland Empire will have health insurance coverage extended to them. However, the coverage does not necessarily translate into care.

The Association of American Medical Colleges estimates that in 2015 the country will have 62,900 fewer doctors than needed; that number will more than double by 2025 as the expansion of insurance coverage and the aging of the baby boomers drive up the demand for care. In the Inland Empire, the shortage of doctors is already severe. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Council on Graduate Medical Education recommends that a given region have 60 to 80 primary care physicians per 100,000 residents and 85 to 105 specialists. The Inland Empire has an estimated 40 primary care doctors and 70 specialists per 100,000 residents – the worst shortage in California, in both cases.

The UCR School of Medicine plans to enroll its first students in August 2013, and is planning a number of policies to encourage its graduates to remain in the Inland Empire and practice primary care medicine.

Purpose of this bill. According to the author this measure seeks to address the primary care physician shortage faced by the Inland Empire by helping to ensure more doctors are educated and trained locally.

The Steven M. Thompson Physician Corps Loan Repayment Program encourages recently licensed physicians to practice in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) in California (the Inland Empire being one of these areas). The program authorizes a plan for repaying up to \$105,000 in educational loans in exchange for full-time service for a minimum of three years.

Related legislation. AB 27 (Medina), which passed out of this committee on March 19, 2013, with a 12-0 vote and is currently on Third Reading on the Senate Floor, is identical to this bill.

Several budget bills in the last few years initially contained funding for the UCR School of Medicine but failed to secure passage. Most recently, AB 1309 (Miller, 2012) would have appropriated \$15 million of an expected settlement to the UC for the UCR School of Medicine. This measure was held on the Suspense File in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

American Academy of Pediatrics, California
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO
Bourns
California Association of Physician Groups
California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
California Medical Association (sponsor)
California Podiatric Medical Association
California Primary Care Association
California State Insurance Commissioner, Dave Jones
City of Jurupa Valley
City of Murrieta
City of Palm Desert
City of Riverside
County of San Bernardino
Deans of the existing University of California schools of medicine
Enterprise Media
Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce
Inland Empire Economic Partnership
Johnson Machinery Company
Kaiser Permanente
League of California Cities, Riverside County Division
Medical Board of California
Riverside County Superintendent of Schools
Riverside Unified School District
Southwest California Legislative Council
Southwest Riverside County Association of Realtors
The Press-Enterprise
University of California
University of California, Riverside Alumni Association
Western Riverside Council of Governments Executive Committee
Six Individuals

Opposition

None on file.

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