
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Carol Liu, Chair
2015 - 2016 Regular

Bill No: AB 174
Author: Gray
Version: June 1, 2015
Urgency: No
Consultant: Olgalilia Ramirez
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Fiscal: Yes

Subject: University of California: medical education

SUMMARY

This bill commencing with the 2016-17 fiscal year, appropriates \$1.25 million from the State General Fund to the Regents of the University of California (UC) to support the expansion of the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) Program in Medical Education (PRIME).

BACKGROUND

UC operates six schools of medicine at Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, and San Francisco. In 2014-15, total enrollment in these programs was approximately 3,000 medical students and more than 5,000 medical residents. Nearly 50% of medical students and medical residents in California are trained by the UC.

PRIME

UC PRIME is an innovative 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. These activities are organized and structured to prepare highly motivated, socially conscious students as future clinicians, leaders, and policymakers. Each new program has an area of focus that is selected based upon faculty expertise, the populations served by each school and its medical center, and other local considerations. Each continues to develop and improve its guidelines for admission and recruitment of students and its new curriculum designed to educate and train future physician leaders, researchers and advocates for the communities they will serve.

ANALYSIS

- 1) This bill commencing with the 2016-17 fiscal year, appropriates \$1.25 million from the State General Fund to the Regents of the UC to support the expansion of SJV PRIME. Specifically, this bill:
 - a) Makes findings and declarations in support of the proposed appropriations.
 - b) Appropriates funds to support expansion of the SJV PRIME program to admit up to 12 students per year and operate the program with up to 48 student participants over the four-year curriculum annually.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to the author, California faces a shortage in the number of physicians available to serve its residents, and the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) is disproportionately affected by this shortage. Furthermore access to health care in the SJV which extends from Stockton to Bakersfield is already well below the recommended level of primary care physicians with a patient to doctor ratio that is 31 percent less than the rest of California. The author also asserts that despite its numerous benefits for the SJV, the Program in Medical Education (PRIME) program lacks ongoing funding for its current enrollment as well as the financial resources needed to expand capacity as an interim step to meeting the region's health care needs. This bill seeks to expand the number of physicians that can serve the state and address the need of quality health care in SJV.
- 2) ***SJV PRIME Program.*** Building on the success of the PRIME program at all University of California (UC) medical schools and its medical education programs throughout the state, the UC Regents approved the UC Merced SJV PRIME program in September 2010 to help provide a unique solution to the healthcare issues of the central valley.

The program is a collaboration between UC Davis, UC Merced, and the University of San Francisco's Fresno Medical Education Program and intended to strengthen the recruitment and retention of new physicians in the SJV – one of California's most medically underserved areas. The SJV PRIME program allows a small number of students to enroll in the UC Davis Medical School and complete the clinic portion of their degree in SJV clinics thereby strengthening the desire for new physicians to practice in the area.

Recognizing the health problems in the valley, the program partners with communities to reverse long-standing health inequities and address the social determinants of health disparities. The program also actively promotes inter-professional education as a pathway toward improved health and health care. For the 2015 academic year, only eight students were admitted to SJV PRIME and overall enrollment in the program stands at 27 students. This bill would appropriate funds to support 12 students per year and operate the SJV PRIME program with up to 48 student participants.

- 3) ***Related Budget Activity.*** The Budget Act of 2015 includes language requiring the University of California to continue planning for a School of Medicine at the Merced campus in accordance with the action approved by the UC Regents on May 14, 2008, and requires the UC to allocate up to \$1 million from the budget appropriation or other funds available to the university for this purpose.
- 4) ***Related and prior legislation.***

SB 131 (Cannella, 2015) identical to this bill, appropriates the \$1.2 million to the UC from the General Fund for the SJV PRIME program. The bill was held on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SB 841 (Canella, 2014) as introduced was identical to AB 174 but was subsequently amended to remove the appropriation for the University of California, Merced Medical School. This bill was held in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

SUPPORT

California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
CAPG
Insurance Commissioner, Dave Jones

OPPOSITION

None received.

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