

**MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT**

DATE REPORT ISSUED: July 18, 2008  
ATTENTION: Board Members  
DEPARTMENT: Medical Board of California, Licensing Program  
SUBJECT: Recognition of International Medical School  
Program  
Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)  
Havana, Cuba  
STAFF CONTACT: Deborah Pellegrini, Chief, Licensing Program

REQUESTED ACTION:

Determine if the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba satisfies the minimum requirements of statute and should be granted recognition.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board grant recognition to the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM), based on the Medical Consultant's positive findings and recommendations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM) in Havana, Cuba, was founded in 1999. The Board presently recognizes several medical schools in Cuba whose primary purpose is to educate Cuban citizens to practice medicine in Cuba. ELAM's mission is to educate non-citizens to practice medicine outside Cuba. In accordance with Title 16, CCR, subsection (c) of section 1314.1, the Latin American Medical School (ELAM) has requested that its educational program for foreign national students be recognized by the Board. Additionally, subsection (a)(2) of section 1314.1 requires the institution to meet the standards set forth in subsection (b) of section 1314.1. Copies of B&P Code sections 2089 and 2089.5 and Title 16, CCR, section 1314.1 are attached with Agenda Item 7A for your reference.

The institution submitted a Self Assessment Report to the Board in May 2007 and supplemental responses in October 2007 and May 2008. These items were forwarded to our Medical Consultant, James Nuovo, M.D., at the University of California, Davis (UCD) School of Medicine, for review. Dr. Nuovo is an expert medical education consultant. He serves as Associate Dean of Students Affairs and Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education at UCD School of Medicine. Dr. Nuovo completed a comprehensive evaluation of the institution's Self Assessment Report and supporting

data. Dr. Nuovo's report dated July 18, 2008 outlining his findings and recommendations is attached for your review. Institution officials addressed all questions and requests for additional information satisfactorily. Dr. Nuovo recommends that the Board grant recognition to the Latin American Medical School with full retroactivity to prior students and graduates. Dr. Nuovo is not recommending a site inspection be conducted.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is no fiscal impact on the Medical Board of California to granting recognition to the Latin American Medical School. If the Board grants recognition to the school, graduates of the program will apply for licensure in California. The application processing fees that they remit will defray the costs of reviewing their applications.

PREVIOUS MBC AND/OR COMMITTEE ACTION:

This is the Board's first experience with a medical school that another country's government has established specifically to train non-citizens to practice abroad where the language of instruction is the country's native language.

Date: July 18, 2008

Agenda Item 7C

To: Kimberly Kirchmeyer  
Deputy Director  
Medical Board of California

From: Jim Nuovo, MD  
Professor & Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Graduate Medical Education  
UC Davis School of Medicine  
4860 Y Street; Suite 2300  
Sacramento, CA 95817

Re: Evaluation of the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM)/Self-Assessment  
Report. Application for Recognition in California

## **BACKGROUND**

The Medical Board of California (Board) requested a review of materials provided by the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) Program, located in Cuba. These were submitted in pursuit of a request for recognition of ELAM by the Board to enable their students and graduates to participate in clinical clerkships, to enter graduate medical education programs in California, and to become eligible to for licensure to practice medicine.

This report is based on my review of the documents provided to the Board.

I have had the opportunity to review the documents submitted by ELAM. The goal of this review was to determine if the medical education received at ELAM meets the requirements of current California statutes and regulations for recognition by the Medical Board of California.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The documents provided indicate that ELAM is in substantial compliance with the requirements of Business and Professions Code Sections 2089 and 2089.5 and California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1, and provides a resident course of professional instruction equivalent to that required by Section 2089.

Based on the School's compliance with the laws and regulation, I recommend that the Board approve ELAM's request for recognition. I also recommend that this recognition be extended to all previous graduates of the Program.

I do not believe a site inspection is necessary. ELAM's documents provide sufficient detail to indicate that the facilities are adequate to fulfill the educational mission of the Program.

## **REVIEW**

ELAM has been in existence since November 15, 1999. Its mission is to “contribute to the training of Primary Health Care physicians in diverse regions of the World.” The students who come to the School are diverse and come from 22 different countries. Consistent with this mission there are “46 different indigenous Latin American ethnic groups among its student body.” This is a 6-year program designed for students who have not completed premedical education. The School provided their 316 page book “Curriculum for the Degree in Medicine” written by the “Center of Higher Medical Education” for the “Republic of Cuba, Ministry of Public Health, Educational and Research Area.” The information in this book is well organized and indicates that this Program has an effective mission to educate physicians who are competent and capable of entering the next level of training; specifically, training in a residency program.

The following is a detailed assessment of the School based on the aforementioned laws and regulation and on their responses to the Self-Assessment Report and to the additional concerns posed by this reviewer.

### **Business and Professions Code Sections 2089**

Section 2089 requires the medical curriculum to extend over four years or 32 months of actual instruction. ELAM is a 6-year program that is comprised of 10 semesters. The total number of hours of courses, 9,094 hours, complies with the 4,000 hour minimum requirement in Section 2089. ELAM requires 80% attendance; however, the Rector or Dean is able to authorize a students’ eligibility to take the final examination in a course as long as the absences in excess of this requirement are appropriately justified. The School’s curriculum includes all of the courses listed in Section 2089 (b). The information provided in the aforementioned “Curriculum for the Degree of Medicine” indicates that the goals, objectives and course content are appropriate.

The School acknowledged that it accepts transfer students from other medical schools. The School provided the details on the policies and procedures of transfer students, such as how students are accepted for transfer, and how the School determines the amount of credit for previous training. All transfer students undergo testing in the relevant courses of study. They are also required to provide “certification of their grade transcript and full documentation of the University properly legalized by the Chancellor of the country they come from.” The Rector of ELAM makes the final determination of prior credit.

### **Business and Professions Code Sections 2089.5**

ELAM documented the school provides instruction in all of the basic sciences and clinical sciences coursework required in Section 2089. As to the specific clinical sciences requirements in Section 2089.5, ELAM documented that instruction in the clinical courses meets or exceeds the minimum requirements in Section 2089.5. For example, Section 2089.5 requires a minimum of 72 weeks of clinical coursework. ELAM’s curriculum provides 158 weeks of clinical coursework.

Students complete the core clinical rotations required in Section 2089.5 in multiple facilities all of which are sponsored by the Government. Their report states that “students from the United States, once they conclude their fourth semester, go on to the Salvador Allende Facility.” This teaching hospital belongs to the Institute of Medical Sciences of the City of Havana. The “Salvador Allende Clinical Surgical University Hospital” has a total of 566 beds which are attended by a staff composed of 240 physicians, 484 nurses, and 232 health technicians.

ELAM is a state university that is part of the national system of education, sciences, and healthcare. The clinical resources available to ELAM students include all of the outpatient and inpatient facilities of the Cuban Health System. Clinical practice training in the outpatient setting “takes place in the academic Primary Health Care settings” under the supervision of “family doctors.”

The organizational structure of the School includes a Council of Directors and Five Vice Rectors. There is no board of directors as “this is a state-run institution assigned to the Cuban Ministry of Public Health.” The report indicates that ELAM is “an institution closely connected with the area of Medical Education of the Ministry of Public Health, the Institutes and Faculties of Medical Sciences of the whole country, the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba.” There is a head of the department for all required courses. The instructors have full-time faculty appointments and appropriate credentials. There is a description of the means by which the School engages in an ongoing review of the program including documentation of the level and extent of its supervision. There is a description of the evaluation process of each student. The evaluations are done on a regular basis and document completion of all components of the curriculum.

With respect to the clinical resources required in Section 2089.5 to support student’s clinical training, ELAM documented that its primary teaching hospital for students from the United States is the Salvador Allende Clinical Surgical University Hospital. This teaching hospital along with the other facilities within the Cuban Health System, meets the requirements of having an adequate number of patients for students’ exposure and experience. The documents provided indicate that the students have adequate exposure on all of the required clinical rotations.

#### **California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1**

The medical school is owned and operated by the government of Cuba. ELAM’s mission is to “contribute to the training of Primary Health Care physicians in diverse regions of the World.”

The Self-Assessment Report contains a clearly defined mission statement and extensive educational/research and service objectives. The report includes the exact language of “broad expectations” and lists goals and objectives. The report lists the integral role of research in its mission and includes statements of its importance, nature, objectives,

processes, and evaluation or research in the medical education and practice of the School. The School has a “Department of Comprehensive General Medicine” that has “strengthened research activities.” All students are required to do a research presentation before a “tribunal made up of professors” on their final research project. The objectives include teaching, patient care, and service to the community. Service to the community includes community health projects in a number of Latin American countries; e.g. Peru, Chile, Columbia, Bolivia, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Brazil. There are clearly written institutional objectives that are consistent with the preparation of graduates to provide competent care.

The structure and content of the educational program provides an adequate foundation in the basic and clinical sciences and enables students to learn the fundamental principles of medicine, to acquire critical judgment skills, and to use those principles and skills to provide competent medical care.

As required in Section 1314.1, the administration and governance system allows the institution to accomplish its objectives, i.e., its statements of the items of knowledge, skills, behavior and attitude that students are expected to learn. The institution’s governance gives faculty a formal role in the institution’s decision-making process. Students enrolled in the program are not permitted to serve as an instructor, administrator, officer, or director of the School.

ELAM provided a detailed description of the faculty for each course; and these documents indicate that there are an adequate number for the size of the school. There is a sufficient description of the credentials of the faculty to indicate that they are appropriately qualified to teach their specific curricular content.

There is a clear description of the governing body of ELAM and a description of the faculty evaluation and development programs.

ELAM has standards governing admission requirements. There is a description of the admissions criteria, student selection and promotion. This description is consistent with the institution’s mission and objectives. The School’s policy on the acceptance of transfer students is similar to those of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). Specifically, transfer students must demonstrate achievements in medical school comparable to those of the students in the class that they join. In addition to the usual type of admissions standards, ELAM also has certain standards related to age and physical condition that are required by the government. The School also requires “no outstanding criminal charges.” Further inquiry was done to determine if the School checks for criminal convictions and how it evaluates an applicant with a criminal record; i.e. what types of crimes would cause it to deny admission to an applicant. Their response indicates that they do check for a criminal record and that a criminal record or case pending would result in denial for admission.

The University receives financial resources from the government of Cuba.

The facilities available to carry out the educational mission, both basic sciences and clinical rotations, are described in their report. They are adequate to achieve the stated educational goals and objectives of the program. The School uses all government health facilities; and students from the United States received much of their inpatient training at the Salvador Allende Clinical Surgical University Hospital. The facilities available to carry out the educational mission are described in the report. The School has “4 main academic buildings in which the facilities where these activities are offered are found.” They have a “total of 41 classrooms with capacity for 30 students, 47 classrooms with capacity for 60 students, and 19 amphitheatres with capacity for 120 students equipped with television sets, overhead projectors, fixed view projectors, and video cassette recorders.”

In addition there are: “7 multidisciplinary laboratories equipped with glassware, and 340 microscopes.” There is also a “modern Medical Information Center where students’ and professors’ self-preparation and research are facilitated, equipped with 125 computers.”

The School indicates that it is compliant with the requirement to retain student transcripts. They are kept indefinitely.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the materials from the Latin American School of Medicine