

MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS

BILL NUMBER: AB 967
 AUTHOR: Valencia
 BILL DATE: April 23, 2025, Amended
 SUBJECT: Physicians and Surgeons: Licensure: Expedite Fee
 SPONSOR: California Medical Association
 POSITION: Oppose

DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT LEGISLATION:

Requires the Medical Board of California (Board) to expedite licensure applications from out-of-state applicants who intend to provide direct patient care in California, as specified, provided they pay a fee of up to \$250.

AB 967 has not been amended since the Board adopted its position of Oppose.

BACKGROUND:

Various statutes¹ within the Business and Professions Code (BPC) require licensing boards to expedite (sometimes referred to as prioritizing) the review of an application for certain applicants, including those who were honorably discharged as an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States, are the spouse/domestic partner of an active duty member of the military assigned to a duty station in California, or have a certain refugee or immigration status. [BPC section 2092](#) is within the Medical Practice Act and requires the Medical Board of California (Board) to expedite the review of a physician’s and surgeon’s license applicant who intends to practice in a medically underserved area or serve a medically underserved population. These statutes do not change the licensing requirements, rather they simply require the Board to review the license applications on an expedited basis.

Board staff analyzed the processing timeframes for the past three fiscal years for expedited vs. non-expedited license applications for a physician’s and surgeon’s license. As shown in the table below, there is a very modest difference in the average² number of days to issue an expedited license.

¹ See BPC sections [115.4](#) and [115.5](#).

² Includes complete and incomplete applications. See further description of complete and incomplete applications under “Analysis” section.

Fiscal Year	Days: Expedited Applications	Days: Non-expedited Applications	Days Saved: Expedited Applications
2021-2022	101	123	12
2022-2023	111	135	14
2023-2024	64	72	8

The State Medical Board of Ohio offers a [concierge licensure service](#) for eligible physician applicants that includes payment of a \$1,000 fee. According to their website:

“By choosing the expedited route, a designated staffer will provide key support services driving the application toward completion, such as obtaining the following items for you: Federation of State Medical Board Disciplinary Report; AMA/AOA Physician Profile; National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) Report.”

ANALYSIS:

According to the author’s fact sheet:

“Out-of-State physicians aiming to practice in California are experiencing long delays in the licensure process. Physicians who have accepted job offers have to wait until they receive a license before they can start practicing medicine. The unpredictability on licensure approval makes it difficult for physicians to plan their move to California. In some instances, physicians abandon plans to move, undermining efforts to bolster the primary care workforce.

To increase the primary care workforce, AB 967 would establish an optional fee to expedite the licensure process for out-of-state physicians seeking to practice in California. The board would have the discretion of setting the price for the fee that is equal to the cost of expediting the licensure process but not to exceed \$250. Physicians would remit payment concurrently with the submission of an application for licensure.”

AB 967 states that the Board shall expedite review of a licensing application if the applicant provides all of the following to the Board:

- A fee in an amount determined by the Board that is “equal to the cost of expediting the licensure process” for these applicants, up to a maximum of \$250.
- Proof of an active and unrestricted license issued by another state, district, or territory of the United States to practice medicine.

- Documentation demonstrating that the applicant intends to provide direct patient care in this state within 90 days of the date of the application, including, but not limited to, a letter from an employer or health care entity indicating all of the following:
 - The applicant has accepted employment or has contracted to provide direct patient care.
 - The applicant's starting date.
 - The location where the applicant will provide direct patient care.

Further, the bill states that this bill does not change the requirements for licensure and that these would not take priority over those who qualify for expedited review under current law. Relatedly, it does not require applicants who qualify for expedited review under current law to now pay a fee to receive that benefit. The bill would sunset on January 1, 2030.

Causes for Delays in Processing Applications

The Board's [application processing timeframes](#) are published on the Board's website and indicate the average number of calendar days, following receipt of an application and required fees, to conduct an initial staff review. If the Board initially reviews a complete application and no issues are identified with the applicant, then a license could be issued within approximately 7-10 days after that review.

The Board will not issue a license until all requirements for licensure have been met. Application processing is delayed while the Board awaits receipt of missing/ incomplete required information or documents. Some notable examples include:

- Applicants who do not provide their full legal name.
- Incomplete/missing Timeline of Activities form (needed to document a gap in training/medical practice of three months or greater).
- Missing exam scores/transcripts.
- PTA/PTB form (used to verify postgraduate training) is missing or filled out incorrectly or with incomplete information.
- Missing/inadequate fingerprint results.

Furthermore, applications may require additional time for review if the applicant has a criminal history, administrative discipline, postgraduate training issues, or other unusual circumstances requiring further evaluation to support consumer protection.

Concerns With the Fee Authority

The authority provided in the bill for the Board to set a fee is unclear as the Board does not follow a different process when reviewing an application for licensure that qualifies for expedited review. A better approach would be for the Legislature to set an appropriate fee, which would also avoid a lengthy rulemaking process.

Impact on In-State Applicants

If AB 967 had been the law during Fiscal Year 2023-2024, staff estimate that more than 20 percent of all physician’s and surgeon’s licenses issued during that year could have qualified for one of the pathways for expedited/priority review. Attempting to expedite such a large portion of the Board’s application volume would delay processing of all non-expedited applications.

Under this bill, California residents who need a license from the Board to pursue postgraduate training or continue practicing in this state after completing their training would be forced to wait longer for their applications to be processed, compared to out-of-state applicants.

FISCAL: Minor one-time costs associated with the rulemaking process and various information technology and licensing application and process changes. Minor ongoing costs associated with reviewing applications to determine if they meet the requirements for expedited review.

SUPPORT: Sutter Health

OPPOSITION: None identified.

ATTACHMENT: [AB 967, Valencia. Physicians and Surgeons: Licensure: Expedite Fee.](#)
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