

# The Growing Demand for Physicians in Nevada

The United States has faced shortages of healthcare workers for years; a challenge that was only exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the pandemic, in 2018, there were 27 open healthcare practitioner jobs—including for doctors, surgeons, and registered nurses—for each available unemployed healthcare practitioner.<sup>1</sup> And the demand for quality care in Nevada is no exception.<sup>2</sup> Despite the many barriers to practicing medicine domestically that internationally trained healthcare workers face, immigrants routinely punch above their weight in the field.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, immigrants made up 23.3 percent of the state’s healthcare workers<sup>4</sup>—while making up 19.9 percent of the population.<sup>5</sup>

**For Nevada to remain competitive, it will be crucial to implement policies that not only attract and retain global talent that is complementary to the U.S.-born workforce but that also build career pathways for the immigrants who already call the Silver State home.**

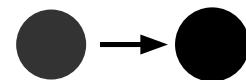
One way to achieve this goal is to join states like Minnesota and Washington in reducing barriers for international medical graduates (IMGs) and other internationally trained healthcare workers.

## PHYSICIANS

Nevada is in dire need of physicians to fill ongoing shortages and to ensure that all Nevadans can access timely, quality care. The state consistently ranks poorly in terms of available physicians, often resulting in difficulties finding a provider and long wait times to get care. In 2019, Nevada ranked 45th in the nation for the number of active physicians per 100,000 residents;<sup>6</sup> 48th for the number of primary care physicians per 100,000 residents; and last (50th) for the number of general surgeons per 100,000 residents.<sup>7</sup> The need for physicians in the state continues to climb.

The number of job postings for physicians increased from **5,051** in 2018 to **5,695** in 2022,<sup>8</sup> an increase of

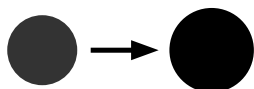
**+12.7%**



## ONLINE JOB POSTINGS FOR PHYSICIANS, 2018 – 2022<sup>9</sup>

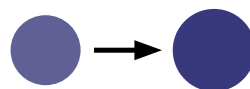
General Internists

**+45.0%**



Obstetricians and Gynecologists

**+39.6%**



Oral Surgeons

**+13.6%**



Between 2015 and 2019, the average share of physicians in Nevada who were immigrants was 31.7 percent.<sup>10</sup> Of those, 68.8 percent were immigrants from Asia, the top region of birth for immigrant physicians in the state.<sup>11</sup>

With increased demand for multilingual and culturally competent practitioners, internationally trained healthcare professionals are uniquely positioned to provide support across all healthcare settings.

The average share of Nevada physicians who were immigrants and graduated from an international medicine school<sup>12</sup>



From 2018 to 2022, the number of healthcare job postings that required bilingual skills in Nevada increased by<sup>13</sup>



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## MEDICAL RESIDENCY PLACEMENT IN NEVADA

Teaching hospitals often find it challenging to fill all their available residency positions and may miss out on the opportunity to attract and retain talent. This was the case in Nevada in 2022, when hospitals were only able to fill 221<sup>14</sup> of the state's 275 open medical residency positions.<sup>15</sup>

However, despite the hurdles that non-U.S. citizens and IMGs face in securing a medical residency in the U.S., such as a lengthy visa process, immigrants were able to fill vacant residency spots that could have otherwise been lost. In 2022, of the 221 medical residency positions that were filled, Nevada placed nine medical doctors who were non-citizen IMGs (4.1 percent) into open residency positions and accepted medical residencies in the state.<sup>16</sup> By reducing barriers these internationally trained healthcare professionals face, Nevada could move toward closing its residency placement gap.

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## BRAIN WASTE IN NEVADA

Many immigrants who have received specialized education, training, and licensing abroad are unable to practice in the state, due to national licensing requirements, problems with language proficiency, or other challenges. Their skillsets are all too often underutilized, leading to underemployment or unemployment in what is commonly referred to as "brain waste."<sup>17</sup>

### In 2021, in Nevada:



**34.0%**

of immigrants with professional and doctorate degrees<sup>18</sup> worked in occupations in the healthcare industry that did not require those degrees.<sup>19</sup>

**Addressing the barriers that prevent additional qualified, internationally trained healthcare workers from practicing in Nevada will be vital to helping the state meet its healthcare needs so it can provide quality care to all Nevadans.**

**ENDNOTES**

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1. New American Economy, “Immigrant Healthcare Workers Are Critical in the Fight Against Covid-19,” April 2020, <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/covid-19-immigrant-healthcare-workers/>.
2. Unless stated otherwise, all data in this report is reflective of Nevada.
3. We define an immigrant as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident in the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
4. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
5. American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 1-year 2019 American Community Survey. See American Immigration Council, “Map the Impact: Nevada,” accessed on November 10, 2022, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/nevada/>.
6. John Packham and Tabor Griswold, “Physician Workforce in Nevada: A Chartbook,” 2022, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340681046\\_PHYSICIAN\\_WORKFORCE\\_IN\\_NEVADA\\_A\\_CHARTBOOK](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340681046_PHYSICIAN_WORKFORCE_IN_NEVADA_A_CHARTBOOK).
7. Ibid.
8. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Lightcast 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsi-data-basic-overview/>.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Sample.
12. Ibid.
13. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Lightcast 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsi-data-basic-overview/>.
14. Ibid.
15. The National Residency Matching Program, “2022 NRMP Main Residency Match: Match Rates by Specialty and State,” 2022, <https://www.nrmp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/2022-Match-Results-by-State-Specialty-and-Applicant-Type-1.pdf>.
16. Ibid.
17. New American Economy, “Untapped Talent: The Costs of Brain Waste Among Highly Skilled Immigrants in the United States,” December 2016, [http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NAE\\_BrainWaste\\_V4\\_Digital.pdf](http://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NAE_BrainWaste_V4_Digital.pdf).
18. Doctorate degrees in this data point include the fields of biology and life sciences, nuclear, industrial radiology and biological technologies, and medical and health sciences and services.
19. American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Sample.