

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
87R4647 MM-D

S.B. 956  
By: Hinojosa  
Higher Education  
4/26/2021  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The legislature in 2015 established a permanent fund to expand graduate medical education (GME) and increase the number of physicians in Texas. The General Appropriations Act allocates funding to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (Rider 39) to administer the GME expansion. The agency provides grants to medical schools and teaching hospitals to create and continue residency programs that establish first-year residency positions. The Education Code defines GME programs to include Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.) and Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree programs. The Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.) degree is not currently included in the definition, thus schools or teaching hospitals seeking to create or expand podiatry residency programs or first-year residency positions in podiatric medicine are not eligible for funding.

Texas needs to increase the supply of podiatric physicians to keep up with population growth and the demand for foot-related services created by aging, diabetes, and obesity. THECB in October 2020 approved a request from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) to create a D.P.M. with a major in podiatric medicine, for the UTRGV School of Podiatry. This will be the first school of podiatry in Texas and will allow students to pursue careers in the medical and surgical care of the foot and ankle—an important specialization for the valley and other areas of the state with high incidence of diabetes and related diseases of the lower extremities. The school will partner with one or more teaching hospitals in the area to establish residency-training programs in podiatry.

Currently, the federal definition for an "approved GME program" includes podiatry. Accordingly, podiatric residency programs are eligible for federal GME funding same as the M.D. and D.O. residencies. This requested change to the definition of GME will ensure that podiatric residency programs qualify for grants under the state's GME program expansion.

As proposed, S.B. 956 amends current law relating to measures to support or enhance graduate medical education for the practice of podiatric medicine in this state.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 58A.001(5), Education Code, as follows:

(5) Redefines "graduate medical education program" to mean:

- (A) creates this subdivision from existing text and makes nonsubstantive changes;
- (B) a nationally accredited post-doctor of podiatric medicine (D.P.M.) program that prepares podiatrists for independent practice in the specialty area of podiatry.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.