

CONFIDENTIAL

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10.02.2011

Submission No. 11
(Overseas Trained Doctors)
Date: 16/02/2011

[REDACTED]

To,
The Committee Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
PO BOX 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: Submission to the inquiry into Registration processes for overseas trained doctors.

Dear Committee Secretary and Members

I would like to submit my submission to your committee, in regards to medical registration process, requirements and exemptions.

I am an overseas trained doctor from India. I hold a bachelors degree in Medicine and Masters Degree in Orthopaedic surgery from India. I have worked in India and aboard as a registrar, fellow and junior consultant. Currently, I live in [REDACTED] with my family and [REDACTED]. We became permanent residents of Australia on [REDACTED]. I have been residing and working in Australia at various hospitals like [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] since March 2005. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Then, I moved to Sydney to work with a team of eminent [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] in the field of [REDACTED] between [REDACTED]. I have been registered with NSW Medical Board since 2005, registration reference number [REDACTED] and exempted from English language test requirement on the basis that my primary, secondary and tertiary education was in English in India. [REDACTED]

I was offered a job for the post of Registrar in [REDACTED] (Area of Need position) at [REDACTED]. As a pre requisite to work in area of need jobs in NSW, as on [REDACTED], I have attended the clinical competence interview, which consisted of 5 delegates from various medical backgrounds at NSW medical board. Then the panel assessed me by discussing various clinical and ethical scenarios. I was successful in the interview, and then the process that followed to satisfy the medical board registration requirement was a night mare. I was told that I need to do English proficiency test in order to get registration. Given that I had worked in Australia over the last years in busy well known hospitals, under eminent surgeons I was perplexed as to the reason why I was asked to prove my language proficiency repeatedly. I made couple of submission to medical board for an exemption, but medical board did not consider the request. [REDACTED]

Finally, I successfully completed Occupational English Test in [REDACTED] and secured B grade in all sub set (Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking).

I commenced work as an [REDACTED] at [REDACTED] under the able supervision of [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] My contract was due for renewal in [REDACTED] but unfortunately the NSW department of health did not approve the renewal of the area of need certification, one of the reasons being [REDACTED] and other reasons which could have unknown to me.

[REDACTED] organised and helped me to extend my contract for another 6 months [REDACTED]

At that time, I could not get a chance to apply for the following year jobs. After I finished my tenure at [REDACTED] I made a decision to take up Australian Medical Council examination in [REDACTED] 2010 and proudly secured [REDACTED] rank out of [REDACTED] candidates in Australia and New Zealand centres. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the New South Wales medical board withdrew my registration, since it was no longer employer supported. [REDACTED]

Thereafter, I applied for couple of jobs in Australia; one such hospital offered me a job in [REDACTED] as a registrar after an interview process. The hospital then progressed to process the application for AHPRA registration in [REDACTED]. Then as a next stage, the completed application was forwarded to Queensland Health Registration Team (QHRT) before it could be sent out to AHPRA for grant of registration. The QHRT refused to send my application to medical board in December 2010, because apparently English Language Proficiency certificate is valid only for 2 years and it had been more than 2 years since I had passed the last English Test. In the meantime, I tried to get advice in this regard from AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency) on 2 occasions. AHPRA advised me that I will be eligible for exemption of English requirement, on the basis of previous learning and Australian work experience. [REDACTED]

Now, I also have a job offer from [REDACTED] as an [REDACTED]

I have written a letter to AHPRA on [REDACTED] with all supportive documents for their consideration of English language requirement. I have not received any official advice from AHPRA until now. [REDACTED]

Can I put forward the following questions to your committee.

1. Where is the safety network for overseas trained doctors who are Australian citizen and permanent resident?
2. How does language deteriorate in an English speaking country like Australia?
3. Where is the fairness in the fulfilling the English requirement even though I passed the requirement and worked as a doctor for couple of years.
4. I am going to be working as a doctor, not as an English professor.

5. At the end even, if I did pass for the 2nd time, the English test, I may have to do it again, if I am unlucky enough not to have a job next year.
6. Is there any other country with this ridiculous requirement for IMGs who have been working in the same country and serving their people?
7. Is this the reward we IMGs have to face for being a dedicated doctor working for the Australian community? What have we benefited from being a permanent resident?

I know that establishing a good health system takes time, but not at the cost of doctors like myself and also we International Medical Graduates have suffered so much in the hands of bureaucrats that is time some more constructive changes need to take place. Bitterness will remain for some time but I hope that the Parliamentary inquiry will improve the registration process and exemptions to doctors like me.

I will be available to make any oral submission and substantiate any of the above should the Committee deem it necessary. I would like to keep my identity as confidential.

Feel free to contact me for any further information via email or mobile.

Yours Sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.