

# Strengthening Georgia's Workforce: Pathways to Re-Licensure for Foreign-Trained Professionals



# Agenda

1. **The Problem:** Booming Business & Stagnant Workforce
2. **The Resource:** Georgia's Deep Pool of Global Talent
3. **The Challenge:** Licensing Barriers & Competition for Global Talent
4. **The Solution:** Licensing Reform & Innovation

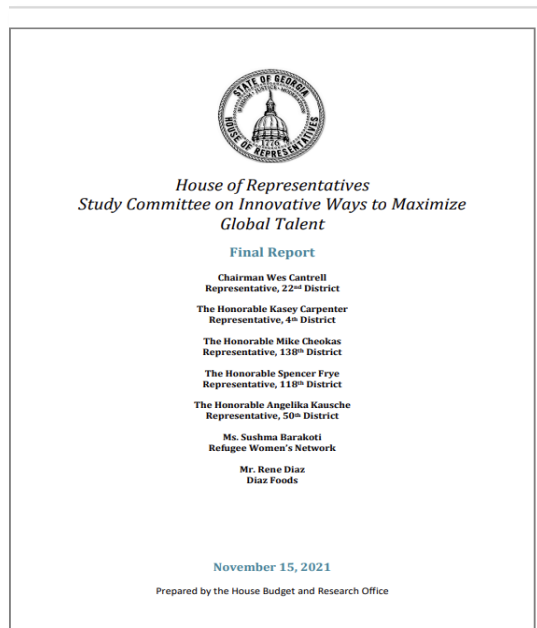
# The BIG Partnership

*An initiative of* **CRSA**  
COALITION OF REFUGEE SERVICE AGENCIES

## The Business & Immigration for Georgia Partnership

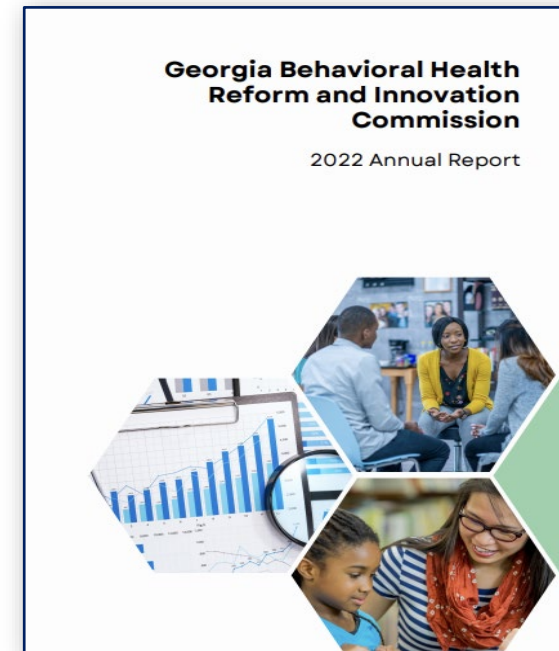
BIG is the state's first partnership of business and civic leaders committed to strengthening Georgia's economy by tapping into the potential in its refugee and immigrant communities.

# BIG Work on Modernizing Occupational Licensing



### 3. Streamline Requirements for Experienced Professionals

This committee recommends making assistance available for individuals navigating the licensing process. This can include developing licensing guides for online access, as well as a full-time employee to assist skilled professionals arriving from other countries and to coordinate global talent development policies.



### 2. Modernize licensing practices across all levels of the behavioral health workforce.

The commission recommends the state modernize its licensing practices by (1) reviewing and updating its systems and processes used by licensing boards to receive and review license applications and renewals, (2) creating a pathway for foreign-trained practitioners to gain licensure in Georgia, and (3) reviewing and updating practicum and supervision requirements for licensure to more closely align with requirements in surrounding states.

# The Problem: Booming Business & Stagnant Workforce

# A Global Georgia: #1 State for Business for 10<sup>th</sup> Yr



Record-Setting Year for Jobs & Investment

## Global Business

- 405 international projects
- Companies from 60 nations
- 3,000 GA facilities
- \$9B in investment (41%)
- 14K jobs (27%)

## Global Talent

- Needed in healthcare, construction & more – all licensed professions

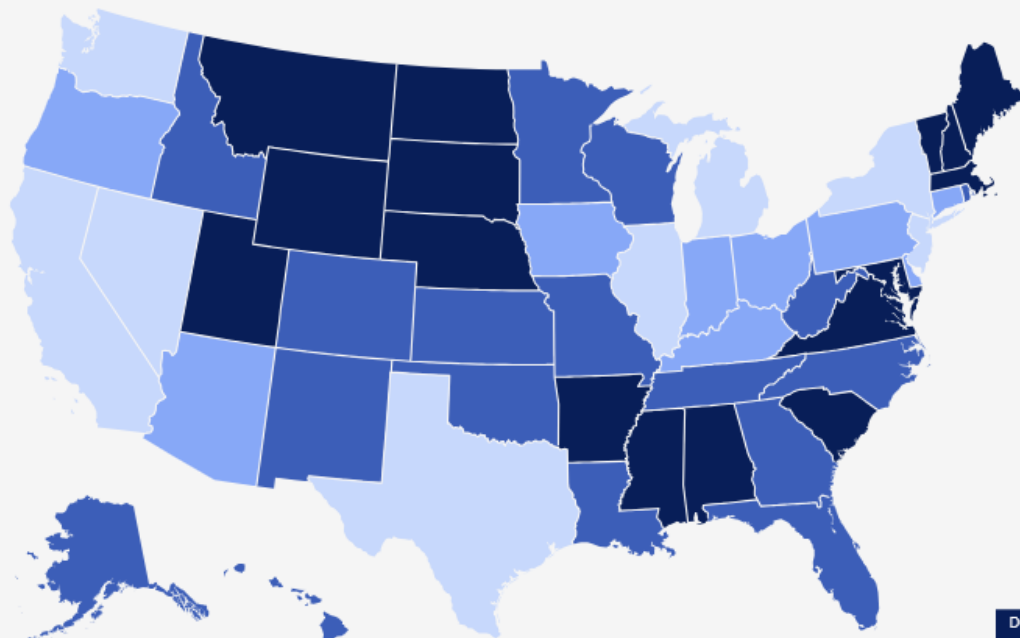
# The Problem: Workforce Shortages & Record Low Unemployment

## The Worker Shortage Across America

Explore the interactive map below to see the impact of the worker shortage crisis in each state.

State

Select a state



Worker Shortage Index

Least severe Severe More severe Most severe

Georgia has 54 available workers for every 100 open jobs.

0.54

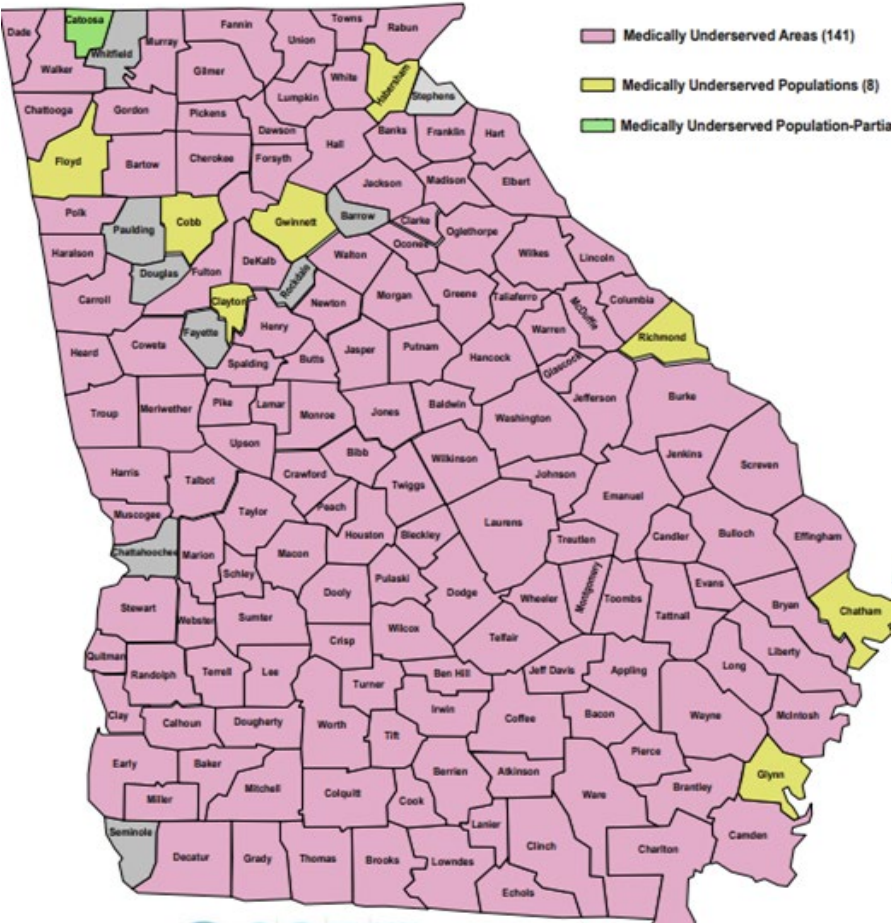
Georgia's Worker Shortage Index

- Job Openings: 323,000
- Unemployed Workers: 174,106
- Labor Force Participation Rate: 61.4%
- Unemployment Rate: 3.3%
- Quit Rate: 2.9%
- Hiring Rate: 4.8%

3.3% unemployment rate, lower than national ave.

# Georgia's Healthcare Workforce Crisis

MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREAS/POPULATIONS (MUA/P)



## Most of Georgia is medically underserved.

- 1 out of 3 Georgians – 3.3M+ people -- live in areas with no primary care doc
- 90 of 159 counties have no psychiatrist, 82 have no OB/GYN, 65 have no pediatrician and 9 have no doctor at all

## Georgia will need to fill 240K healthcare positions by 2032

2020 GA Board for Healthcare Workforce; 2022 Kaiser Family Foundation Report; 2022 Report of Governor's Commission on State of GA's Healthcare Workforce



# Ranked Worst in Nation for Healthcare by Forbes, 2023

Forbes ADVISOR

Source: Forbes Advisor • Get the data • Embed

Forbes ADVISOR

## Top 5 Worst States for Healthcare

### 1. Georgia

Georgia's score: 100 out of 100

The Peach State ranked third worst in our category examining healthcare cost due, in part, to the state having the second highest percentage of residents who chose not to see a doctor at some point in the past 12 months due to cost (15.50%).

Georgia also stands out as the state with the:

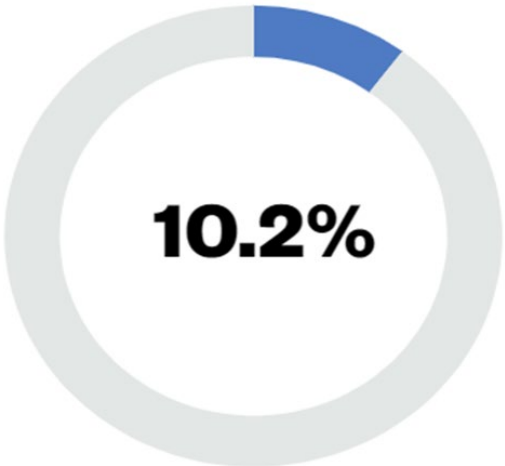
- Third highest percentage of residents who lack health insurance coverage (12.63%).
- Fifth highest kidney disease mortality rate (18.87 deaths per 100,000 state residents).
- Eighth highest stroke mortality rate (44.27 deaths per 100,000 state residents).
- Eighth highest average deductible for residents with single health insurance coverage through an employer (\$2,269 annually).

### 2. Alabama

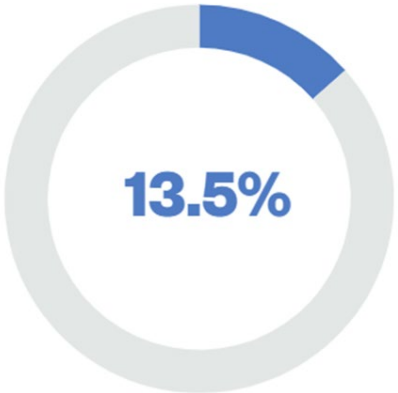
# The Resource: Georgia's Deep Pool of Global Talent



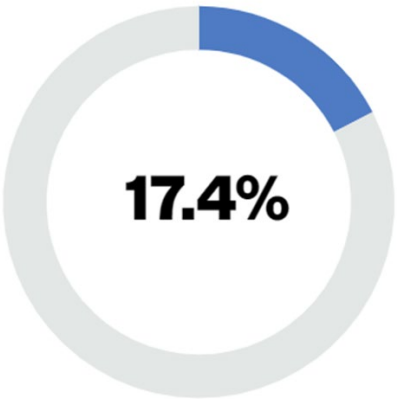
# Global Talent Fast Facts



Immigrant share of population



Share of workers in the labor force who are immigrants



Share of entrepreneurs who are immigrants

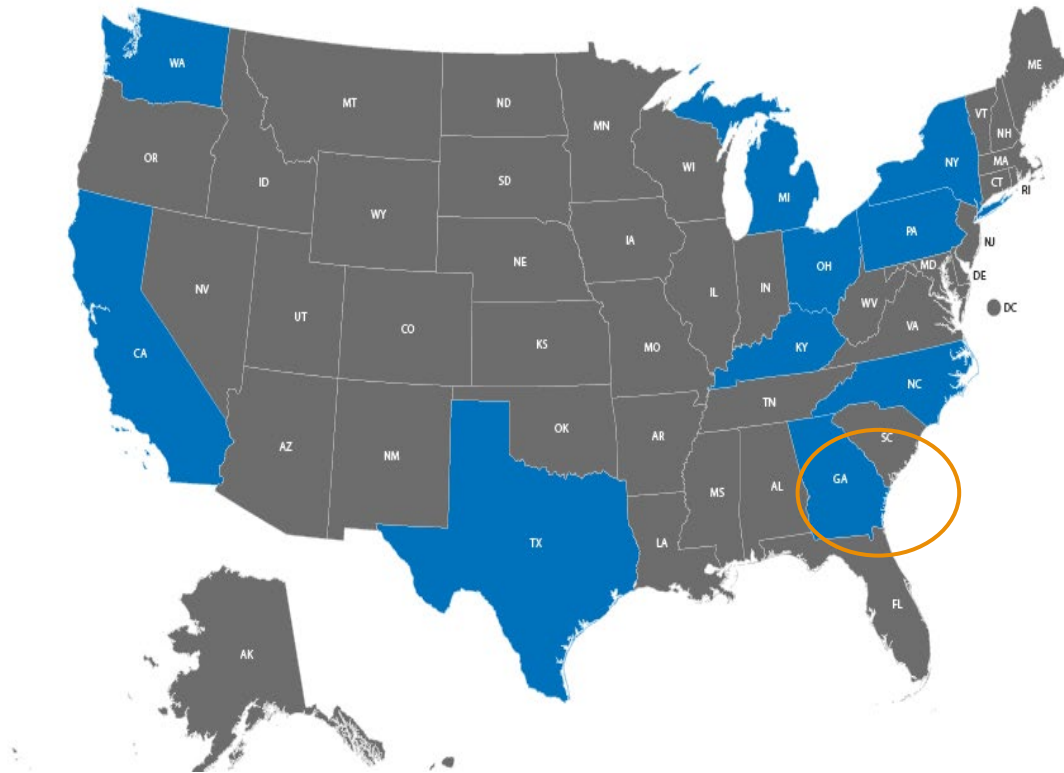
## 1 in 10 Georgians – 1 in 7 GA workers – is foreign-born

- Approx. 20% of doctors & aides & 25% of construction workers
- Nearly 50% are naturalized citizens & others on path to citizenship
- 75% have a HS education; 33% have a college or grad degree
- They possess language & cultural skills other Georgians often lack & global businesses value (Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Arabic; 60+ languages in City of Clarkston alone)

# Georgia's Refugee Program: An Untapped Resource

## TOP 10 U.S. STATES FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN 2021

1. California
2. Texas
3. New York
4. Kentucky
5. Michigan
6. North Carolina
7. Washington
8. Ohio
9. Pennsylvania
10. Georgia



**GA has one of the oldest, largest & most successful refugee programs in US**

- Over past 40+ yrs, 60,000+ have come to Georgia, leaving behind jobs in healthcare, IT, skilled trades & more, due to war & conflict
- The state welcomes **~3,000 new Georgians yearly, inc 1000s from Afghanistan & Ukraine since 2021**

# The Challenge: Licensing Barriers

# Brain Waste



- **Nearly 20%** of foreign-born Georgians with a college education are unemployed or employed in low wage jobs **vs. 15%** of other Georgians
- Brain waste costs GA \$960M in foregone earnings and \$700M in lost tax revenue/yr
- There are **263,000+** underemployed and unemployed refugees & immigrants with health-related degrees in US, often willing to move to return to practice

# Starting from Scratch

Most experienced foreign-born professionals will have to start from scratch in GA

- This delays entry into workforce, often by years
- Many cannot afford time & cost to start over
- Most settle for lower-skill, lower-wage jobs or leave Georgia for states with more modern licensing rules & more welcoming posture toward global talent





# GA Licensing Barriers → Brain Waste



1. **Education & experience earned overseas often don't "count"**
  - Must graduate from an "approved" or "accredited" program, i.e. US or Canada
  - Supervisors & references must be from US
  - Refugees can lack access to school documents, have disrupted work experience
  - Most GA reforms today apply to licensed professionals from other states only
2. **Costly & time-consuming credential evaluation process**
3. **Difficulties navigating licensing process** (geared toward US applicants)
4. **Limited English language and other support**
5. **No state hub to integrate professionals relocating from abroad**

\*Professions with specific pathways inc. nursing, occupational therapy, landscape architecture, veterinary medicine

The Challenge:  
The Competition for Global Talent

# Utah Licensing Reform to Attract Global Talent

## Demand is high from immigrant professionals looking to become licensed in Utah

By Sydnee Gonzalez, KSL.com | Posted - Aug. 6, 2023 at 7:09 p.m.



Utah SB 35, 2023; SB 43, 2022

[www.ksl.com/article/50699458/demand-is-high-from-immigrant-professionals-looking-to-become-licensed-in-utah](http://www.ksl.com/article/50699458/demand-is-high-from-immigrant-professionals-looking-to-become-licensed-in-utah)

- In 2022 and 2023, streamlined licensing for immigrant professionals via 9 state agencies
- *“Our economy is demanding that we need more workforce and we just can't find more workforce here. This isn't about taking jobs away from Americans; it's about helping ...helping our economy to continue to grow.” Gov. Spencer Cox, April 21, 2023*
- **May-June 2023, received 2,600+ responses from foreign-licensed professionals interested in becoming licensed in Utah.**

# The Race for Healthcare Talent



## Since Jan 2024 . . .

- Feb:** Tennessee SB 211 (*256 inquiries in 1 mth*)
- March:** Wisconsin AB 954
- April:** Virginia HB 995
- May:** Iowa SF 477

The Solution:  
Licensing Reform & Innovation

# Georgia SB 529: Bipartisan VA Model (Effective April 2024)



## **SB 529 would ease barriers to practice for experienced international physicians in Georgia.**

SB 529 would empower the Composite Medical Board to issue two-year limited licenses to qualified international physicians. After passing all medical exams and practicing under a limited license for an eligible hospital or other provider for 4 years, including 2 years in an underserved community, the physician could apply for a full license.

# Recommendations for Georgia



1. **Streamline licensing for experienced international professionals, esp. in health, trades**
  - Support legislation like SB 529 to streamline licensing for international physicians
  - Review pathways for foreign professionals & recommend comprehensive reform, eg UT
  - Reduce licensing requirements generally, so safe for GA but competitive nationally
2. **Make SOS website user-friendly for global talent**
  - Language options, hotline, dedicated liaison, links to central hub
3. **Create Office of Global Georgia**
  - Welcome & integrate professionals relocating from abroad
  - Offer fed-funded programs to cover translation & credential evaluations
  - Invest in career readiness and English learning programs

Thank you  
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