My wife and I had the chance to immigrate to the United States in 2009 and we took it looking forward to so many promising opportunities for our kids. We’re building our family life here in Colorado—working hard and raising two amazing children—yet a big chunk of my livelihood has been misplaced because I was forced to leave behind my career as a medical doctor.

I already had nine years of experience practicing medicine before we moved to the US. I came here eager to transfer my skills to the world-renowned American healthcare workforce, but soon found myself with the prospect of completely starting over to even get my foot in the door. Clinical experience in a US medical residency program could give me the chance to prove myself and learn more about navigating the local healthcare system, yet many institutions don’t even consider residency candidates who graduated from medical school more than five years ago. For Colorado programs, that cut-off is as low as two years. I was seven years out from completing medical school when I came here. It makes no sense that applicants fresh out of medical school automatically had better chances than me in the eyes of residency training programs and my additional two years of practical experience essentially counted against me.

By the way, I’m not the only one in my household who has faced restarting an advanced healthcare career from scratch. My wife, with nearly a decade of experience practicing dentistry, had to go through the expensive, time-consuming process of completely repeating dental school—from applications to board exams. Meanwhile, our children are growing and I’ve worked to care for them and keep food on the table. I’ve been a phlebotomist and lab technician and career navigator for other International Medical Graduates (IMGs) striving to utilize their professional skills. Now I’m in graduate school for public health. I don’t want to leave the healthcare field, but I’ve heard over and over that my medical training makes me overqualified for the jobs I interview for. I hope having my MPH will open more doors to contributing to our community at the level I’ve been trying to do since I got here.

I’ve always said that no one is promised a perfect or even fair life, but the drive to work hard for a better one was instilled in me by my father who did everything he could to support our large family. The COVID crisis has only made it more frustrating to know that expertise among Colorado’s IMGs is being overlooked and wasted while the medical system and patients who rely on it suffer due to a shortage of physicians. Please support HB22-1050 to strengthen Colorado’s healthcare workforce by creating improved pathways to medical licensure for highly qualified IMGs who just want the chance to contribute their hard-earned skills to support their families and help the community.

Support for HB22-1050:

**MUAWIA’S STORY**

Dr. Muawia Obeid and his wife immigrated to the United States from Jordan in 2009 to offer a brighter future for their twins. The family made significant investments for Muawia’s wife to reestablish her dental career while Muawia has cared for their small children, worked as a phlebotomist, lab technician, and career navigator, and is currently earning his Master of Public Health at CU. Having completed medical school in Russia, Muawia left behind nine years of practicing medicine when his family relocated to Colorado.

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**VOTE YES ON HB22-1050**