

New Bill Would Train Doctors, Boost Planned UC Merced Med School

By Diana Aguilera

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With physicians in short supply throughout the Central Valley, two legislators are hoping to recruit more doctors and start the process of creating a medical school in the region.

AB 174 would provide resources to fund a two-year planning effort to establish a medical school at UC Merced.

Credit University of California, Merced

Assembly Bill 174 would put \$1.85 million into a partnership between UC Merced, UC Davis and UCSF- Fresno. Assembly Member Adam Gray, D-Merced, recently proposed the bill, which was co-authored by Senator Anthony Cannella, R-Ceres.



Gray says if the bill becomes law, it would expand enrollment in UC Merced's medical school partnership bringing future doctors to the Central Valley.

"The program encourages medical students to come to areas that are underserved and do part of their education and serve their residency programs in those areas," he says.

The bill would also allocate \$1 million to fund UC Merced's two-year planning effort to establish a medical school at the university. Gray says this is key when trying to recruit future doctors to stay in the valley.

"It doesn't do any good to have access to health care insurance if you can't have access to a physician," Gray says. "And one of the best ways to recruit physicians to a region is in fact to have a medical school located in that region."

The UC Regents authorized UC Merced to develop a plan to establish a medical school back in 2008. But the announcement did not include funding for the plan, and UC Merced has not been able to submit a proposal.

Gray introduced a similar bill in 2014 but it hit a road block in the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 174 is expected to have a hearing this month.

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