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# Putin Signs Law Introducing Work Placement Requirements for Young Doctors

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Students at Moscow State Medical University. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin on Monday signed a law requiring students enrolled in state-funded residency programs at medical universities to undergo a work placement at public hospitals and clinics for up to three years, a measure aimed at easing chronic staff shortages in the country's healthcare system.

Under the law, which partially revives a Soviet-era practice, students who are entering or currently enrolled in state-funded residency programs will be required to complete a period of "mentorship" in a state or municipal clinic covered by Russia's compulsory health insurance program.

A student who accepts a government-funded residency slot at a medical university or college must now sign an agreement requiring them to work at a specific medical facility, usually a regional clinic or hospital. Those who refuse may continue their training on a paid basis, but

only if spots are available at their institution.

The law, which was passed in the lower-house State Duma last week and then in the upper-house Federation Council, will take effect on March 1, 2026, applying to graduates from that year onward.

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State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said last week that overworked hospital staff and high numbers of medical patients that exceed recommended norms are taking a toll on Russia's public health system, leading to poorer healthcare quality. He cited data claiming that Russia lacked around 23,300 doctors and 63,600 mid-level medical personnel in early 2025.

The lower house of parliament passed the work requirement bill last Tuesday with a unanimous vote following minor procedural corrections, according to independent journalist Farida Rustamova.

Rustamova cited concerns from two lawmakers that the proposed work requirements may discourage young medical professionals from completing their residencies, especially if they are asked to work in rural or remote areas, without guarantees of housing and other forms of social support.

In the Soviet healthcare system, the state assigned newly graduated doctors to specific hospitals or clinics for between three and five years.

*Correction: An earlier version of this article stated that the new law would affect all medical school graduates. That has since been corrected to state that students specifically enrolled in state-funded residency programs are impacted by the legislation.*

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