Tips for Physicians coming to Israel

By Amir Shanon MD MPA
Director, Division of Medical Professions
Ministry of Health

License to practice medicine in Israel:
The practice of medicine in Israel is regulated by law and the Ministry of Health, Division of Medical Professions is responsible for the licensure of physicians in Israel.

In order to be licensed to practice medicine in Israel, the physician must be an Israeli citizen or a permanent resident in Israel; a graduate of an accredited medical school; post a one year rotating internship ("STAJ"); of "good character" (i.e. - no criminal record), and in good mental and physical health.

Graduates of foreign medical schools are required to pass a written exam administered twice a year by the Israeli Ministry of Health. The exam is a multiple choice question exam, written in Hebrew. Whenever possible, and on condition that there are at least ten examinees that wish to take the exam in another language, the exam is translated to other languages as well.

Exemptions from the Israeli medical licensing exam:
1) At present, graduates of medical faculties in the US, Canada, Great Britain, France, South Africa Australia and New Zealand, are exempt from the licensing exam. This is subject to change in the future.

Please note: Graduates of accredited medical schools who did not complete a one year rotation internship abroad and wish to practice medicine in Israel, must take and pass the licensing exam and complete a one year rotational internship in Israel.

2) Also exempt from the licensure examination are physicians certified as specialists in their native country and recognized as such by the Israeli Medical Association Scientific Council, or physicians whose residency abroad was fully recognized by the Israeli Medical Scientific Council and who are required by the Scientific Council to pass the Stage II specialist exam in Israel only, in order to receive specialist certification in Israel.

3) Graduates of foreign medical schools who legally practiced medicine abroad for at least 14 years are also exempt from the licensing exam. In order to be licensed in Israel, these physicians are required to successfully pass a period of observation known as “Histaklut”.

“Histaklut” consists of two parts: First, the physician works for 6 months, under observation, in an accredited medical department of an accredited hospital in Israel. A special permit to practice medicine in Israel is issued by the Div. of Medical Professions for this purpose. Upon successful completion of this period, the physician meets with a special committee, which evaluates his/her knowledge in general medicine.

Physicians who successfully pass the two parts of the “Histaklut” period are entitled to receive a temporary license to practice medicine in Israel.

4) Graduates who passed the – USMLE exams:
Foreign graduates who passed Part – 1 and the Part – 2 (CK) exams, are exempt from the licensing exam required to complete the internship in Israel.

Foreign graduates who passed all three steps of the USMLE exams and in addition, completed an internship abroad or were licensed to practice medicine abroad and completed at least one year of clinical work;

are exempt from the Israeli licensing exam.

Types of medical Licenses to practice medicine in Israel:
The Division of Medical Professions issues 3 different types of licenses to practice medicine in Israel: A temporary license, a permanent license and a limited permit to practice medicine in Israel.

- **Temporary license:**
  Physicians, entitled to practice medicine in Israel, initially, receive a temporary license. The license is issued for 15 months.

- **Permanent License:**
  A permanent license to practice medicine in Israel is issued to physicians who have legally practiced medicine in Israel for at least 12 months. To receive the permanent license, the physician must present the Ministry of Health with a letter of recommendation from a certified Israeli medical specialist, who knows and has observed the applicant’s work in Israel personally and professionally for at least one year.

- **Limited Permit:**
  A limited permit is issued to physicians who are not Israeli citizens or permanent residents in Israel, who wish, for various reasons, to practice medicine in Israel for a limited period of time.

  The “limited permit” is issued for work in a specific ward in a specific hospital, for a limited period of time only.

  To receive the permit, the physician must be accepted for work in Israel in an accredited department of an accredited hospital. It is the hospital that applies to the Ministry of Health for the limited permit, on behalf of the physician.

  **At present, the permit is issued at first for up to one year and can be extended for up to six years. The regulations in that regard might change in the near future.**

Documents to be included in an application for a license to practice medicine in Israel:
1) An Israeli identity card.
2) 2 - personal photos
3) A medical diploma or a letter from the Dean of the medical faculty, verifying completion of studies and entitlement to a medical diploma.
4) An official document confirming the dates of commencement and completion of medical studies.
5) An official document confirming completion of internship (specifying the wards attended and the dates of start and completion of each rotation).
Updated: 21/12/2015

6) A valid license to practice medicine abroad.
7) Current registration as a physician from abroad.
8) Where applicable: Specialist Certification (Board Certification in the States).
9) Official documents confirming clinical work in hospitals or other medical institutions.
10) Letter(s) of “good standing” from the appropriate Medical Board or medical authorities abroad.

Comments:
A. All documents should be translated into Hebrew and notarized by a licensed notary in Israel.
B. Two copies of all documents should be submitted.

Comments:
Do not send original documents with your application.
There is no need to enclose your C.V. with the application.

The Licensing Process:
The process of applying for a license to practice medicine in Israel, begins with filing an application form. The form can be downloaded from our website at the address: www.health.gov.il/professions. The form with all other required documents should then be sent to the Division of Medical Professions in the Ministry of Health, 39 Yermiahu Street, Jerusalem, Israel. Once the application is received, it will be reviewed.

A temporary license to practice medicine will be issued by the Division of Medical Professions, for applicants who fulfill all the requirements and are entitled for the license. The process of issuing the license takes, on average, 4 weeks.

DID YOU KNOW?

1) Osteopathy: Graduates of accredited osteopathy schools in the US, who are licensed to practice medicine in the US, can be licensed to practice medicine in Israel. At present, graduates of accredited osteopathy schools in the US are exempt from the medical licensing exam. This is subject to change in the future.

2) Tourists are eligible to take the medical licensing exam in Israel. A passing score is valid for 3 years.

3) Physicians who are certified as specialists abroad and who wish to be certified as such in Israel, may send their documentation to the Israeli Medical Association Scientific Council prior to their Aliyah.

4) Graduates of medical schools in the Caribbean Islands are not exempt from the Israeli licensing exam.
5) There are two types of "Histaklut", one for licensing purposes and another for the purpose of specialist certification (now called "Hataama").

6) There is no age limit for issuing a license to practice medicine in Israel.

7) Age of retirement in most public medical institutions in Israel is – 67 for males and – 64 for females.

8) Legally, basic knowledge of Hebrew is one of the requirements for a license to practice medicine in Israel. At present, this requirement is not implemented. This might change in the near future.

More information regarding licensing of physicians and other medical and allied health professionals in Israel, as well as information regarding other activities of the Division of Medical Professions, can be found in our web site at the following address:
www.health.gov.il/professions

"Kol Habriut" is a calling center where you can receive answers to questions you might have:
Call - *5400 or from abroad: 972- 86241010
E-mail: call.habriut@moh.health.gov.il

You can also send a letter by regular mail to the Division of Medical Professions at the address:
The Division of Medical Professions
Ministry of Health
39 Yirmiyahu St
P.O.Box 1176
Jerusalem 9101002