



Stuart Henochowicz, MD MBA FACP
Governor, ACP Virginia Chapter

May 29, 2020

The Honorable Timothy Kaine
The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senators Kaine and Warner:

On behalf of the nearly 4,000 members of Virginia Chapter of the American College of Physicians, I am writing to share our support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S.3599) and the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (S.948).

The ACP has long recognized the value of international medical graduates (IMGs) and their contributions to health care delivery in this country. IMGs are currently serving on the frontlines of the US health care system and have played an integral role in the delivery of health care in our country, even before the ongoing global pandemic. Statistically, they are more likely to practice in remote, rural areas and in poor underserved urban areas than their US medical graduate counterparts. Overall, they comprise nearly a quarter of the physician workforce in the United States.

According to the 2016 Virginia Primary Care Needs Assessment, our state has 247 Healthcare Professional Shortage Areas which harbor a population of over 2.2 million. Thus, over 1 in 4 Virginians is directly impacted by these physician shortages.

Legislation has been introduced in the US Congress that supports IMGs and their families, providing them immediate protections as they fight against COVID-19, and to provide them a pathway to permanent residency status in exchange for a long-term solution for the endemic healthcare workforce shortages negatively impacting many Americans. The Virginia Chapter of the ACP is urging support and passage of these bills:

The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S.3599): This bill would authorize immigrant visas for health care clinicians, including up to 15,000 physicians who are eligible to practice in the United States or are already in the country on temporary work visas. The visas would provide a pathway to employment based permanent resident status, providing crucial protections to these frontline workers and their families.

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The Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (S.948): This bill allows states to sponsor US-trained foreign physicians to work in medically underserved areas in exchange for a waiver of the physicians' two-year foreign residence requirement. It increases the base number of annual Conrad waivers available to each state from 30 to 35, with a demand-based sliding scale to determine the number of available waivers in future years, and includes a provision to address the current backlog in the system for physicians on immigrant visas who wish to acquire permanent residency status.

The Virginia Chapter of the American College of Physicians urges your support of these bills which offer a solution to address these important issues, for the betterment of healthcare for all Virginians, and for the physicians who are committed to serve them.

Sincerely,



Stuart Henochowicz MD MBA FACP
Governor
ACP Virginia Chapter



John Paul Verderese MD FACP
Chair – Health and Public Policy
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ACP Virginia Chapter



Atul Bali MD CHS FASN FNKF
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