



CENTRA

Southside Community Hospital

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Dear Senator,

I am writing this letter in support of doctors serving communities in the state of Virginia. We are experiencing an incredible shortage of physicians in our area, being a predominately rural community. Due to the growing geriatric population and rising number of retiring physicians there is a significant deficit of physicians and projected worsening of patient to physician ratio.

Physicians from other countries have been filling these positions of shortages and helping us run vital services in hospitals and clinics, as well as providing much needed specialty services. Many of them have created deep roots in the community and have been serving our communities for many years. Like any other physician, they deliver the highest quality of care with love and compassion for our community.

Unfortunately, there is a sense of uncertainty amongst this group of physicians for many reasons. To improve healthcare access to rural communities we propose maximum flexibility be given to these physicians, so they can work in as many clinics and hospitals as possible without restrictions.

Physician recruitment and retention in rural communities is an ongoing concern. The Physician National Interest waiver program, which helps the doctors to be retained in the rural communities, has been a great source to fill the physician shortages.

I came across Senate bill S.948, which increases the number of physicians per state to 35 instead of 30 and provides lots of other incentives to physicians serving in communities like ours.

If these doctors are guaranteed permanent residency after serving for 3-5 years, it will help recruitment and encourage retention. It will also be a great incentive for future physicians to serve underserved communities. Additionally, it would assist hospitals in decreasing the cost of recruitment.

The incentives offered by bill S.948 are crucial for physician recruitment and retention. This problem, if unattended, can affect patients as physician shortages lead to increased wait times, reduced physician contact, and an overall reduced quality of care.

We request you to do what is necessary to help us achieve the goal of providing increased access to health care for our citizens.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Tom Angelo, VP/CEO
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