



IOWA HOSPITAL
ASSOCIATION

We care about Iowa's health

May 6, 2020

Via Email Only

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
United States Senate
135 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joni K. Ernst
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

Dear Senators Grassley and Ernst:

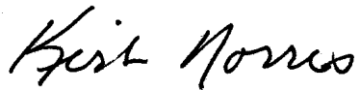
First, let me thank you for your continued service to Iowa and the United States during the COVID-19 public health emergency. We appreciate your assistance in ensuring that Iowa's hospitals are given the resources to not only serve their communities but remain financially viable. We thank you for your responsiveness.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Iowa's hospitals were focused on growing and sustaining a strong health care work force in Iowa. As you both are aware, our entire country—not just Iowa—is experiencing a health care work force shortage. That is why, on behalf of Iowa's 118 hospital members, I am writing to request that you support the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (the "Act").

The bi-partisan Act, introduced by Senators Perdue (R-GA), Young (R-IN), Durbin (D-IL), and Coons (D-DE), will help ensure that the thousands of foreign-born nurses and doctors overseas who want to practice in the United States are given the opportunity to do so. The Act will authorize the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to recapture up to 25,000 immigrant visas for nurses and 15,000 immigrant visas for physicians. The Act would also allow USCIS to recapture immigrant visas for the families of these medical professionals. It is important to note that the Act would not create more visas; rather, it would simply reallocate a limited number of unused visas from prior years for doctors and nurses now. The Act also puts many safeguards in place. In order for employers to hire individuals with these visas, they must attest that the health care worker they are hiring who receives one of the visas will not displace an American worker. The Act also ensures that these medical professionals meet high standards of equivalent education, state licensure, English fluency, and must have clean disciplinary records.

One-sixth of our nation's health care work force is foreign-born. Over 3,000 of Iowa's 13,000 physicians are foreign-born. There is no doubt that foreign-born health care workers are vital to our country's and Iowa's health care systems, especially while we fight a pandemic. Iowa's hospitals would benefit greatly from the Act because it will give them a larger pool of health care workers to recruit from for their communities. We urge you both to support the Act so that our hospitals can have a strong and sustainable pipeline of talent that will help them and fight this pandemic now and serve their communities into the future. We hope to work with you to advance this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Kirk Norris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Kirk Norris
President/CEO