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May 13th, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue
 United States Senate
 455 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
 United States Senate
 711 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
 United States Senate
 185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
 United States Senate
 218 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
 United States Senate
 517 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
 United States Senate
 437 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators Perdue, Young, Cornyn, Durbin, Coons, and Leahy:

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit organization of 21,000 members that represents the health interests of rural Americans, applauds your bipartisan introduction of *the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* (S. 3599). Your bill would alleviate visa-based restrictions for international nurses and physicians who have trained in the United States, allowing these heroes to join the fight against the COVID-19 virus and diminish workforce shortages in rural America.

Health care workforce shortages that have plagued rural communities for decades have become exacerbated by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, 77 percent of rural counties were designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), and while approximately 20 percent of the nation's population lives in rural areas, only nine percent of U.S. physicians practice in rural America.

This important bipartisan legislation would allow tens of thousands of nurses and physicians to join the fight against COVID-19 and address the significant health care workforce shortages in rural America by recapturing unused immigrant visas that Congress has previously authorized and allocating those visas to international doctors and nurses who have trained in the United States. These heroes could improve access to high quality health care services in rural communities and allow them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises more effectively, and ultimately save lives.

NRHA strongly supports *the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and commends your efforts to protect rural health by working to bring thousands of qualified physicians and nurses to join the United States' health care workforce. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Mason Zeagler at 202-639-0550 or by email at mzeagler@nrharural.org. We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation and being stalwart champions for rural America.

Sincerely,

Alan Morgan
 Chief Executive Officer