

Randy Oostra, DM, FACHE | President and Chief Executive Officer

May 8, 2020

Our Mission is to
improve your health
and well-being.

The Honorable John Cornyn
Chairman, Subcommittee on Border Security
and Immigration, Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Border Security, Senate Judiciary Comm
771 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Durbin,

We are writing to express our support for the recently introduced Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act. The bill is intended to temporarily increase the country's health care workforce by making available to foreign-born doctors and nurses unused or recaptured immigrant visas, thus allowing them to legally practice medicine in the United States. As a result, we will be able to improve care access – particularly in underserved areas during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the bill would make available upwards of 40,000 visas to foreign-born nurses residing overseas and to foreign-born physicians already working under temporary visas, however limited in their ability to practice.

As has been well documented, the U.S. trains far too few physicians. Among comparative countries, our nation ranks toward the bottom of the medical-graduates-per-100,000-residents list. In addition, the number of medical residencies in this country has remained relatively stagnant for more than 20 years. These factors help explain why the U.S. currently suffers from a shortage of physicians, particularly primary care physicians.

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) estimates there are well over 5,800 primary care service shortage areas. This also explains why the Association of American Medical Colleges projects the physician shortage will grow by upwards of 100,000 over the next decade. The shortage would be far worse if it were not for the fact that the nation's health care market already employs approximately 250,000 foreign-trained physicians who constitute approximately 25% of the U.S. total. As a country, we could employ more foreign-trained physicians – however these graduates face significant challenges or barriers in obtaining practice licenses.

We appreciate your support of this bill and welcome any comment or opportunity to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Randy Oostra, DM, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: The Honorable David Perdue
The Honorable Christopher Coons
The Honorable Todd Young