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May 7, 2020

Via E-mail Only

The Honorable C. Pat Roberts
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry W. Moran
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 521
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger W. Marshall, MD
United States House of Representatives
312 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Roberts, Senator Moran, and Representative Marshall:

I would like to thank you for your continued service and dedication to the people of Kansas. I have lived in this state for 5 years and have grown to love my neighbors, my community, and the great state of Kansas.

As you are aware, our country, and the state of Kansas, is experiencing a health care work force shortage. I am writing to request that you support the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (the "Act"). Leading a hospital in rural Kansas has never been more difficult; yet, we take on these challenges to provide our community with the best health care they could receive – anywhere. We focus on recruiting and retaining a talented health care workforce. Part of this strategy is recruiting high quality, foreign-born physicians.

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. There is no doubt that foreign-born health care workers are vital to our state's and country's health care systems, especially while we fight a pandemic. Kansas' 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.A. Whitaker".

Robert A. Whitaker
President & Chief Executive Officer