



June 4, 2020

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

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

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

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

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

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

Re: Support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

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

On behalf of our physician members of the American Association for Physician Leadership (AAPL) is writing to voice our strong support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act and to urge the Senate to quickly pass the legislation. International Medical Graduates (IMGs) are an important part of our U.S. health care teams and serve on medical front lines all across the country. Consequently, the ability to recapture 15,000 unused employment-based physician immigrant visas from prior fiscal years would help enable our U.S. physicians to have the support they need and our U.S. patients to have the care they deserve.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. was already facing a serious shortage of physicians largely due to the growth and aging of the population and the impending retirements of many physicians. This shortage was dramatically highlighted by the lack of physicians in certain key areas during the COVID-19 pandemic which forced states to recall retired physicians, expand physicians' practice areas, and amend out of state licensing laws. This heightened demand for physicians will only continue to grow, and soon will outpace supply, leading to a projected shortfall of nearly 122,000 physicians by 2032. Thus, increasing the number of visas that are available to IMGs is critical to addressing this mounting shortage.

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Moreover, IMGs already play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable populations in the U.S. For example, foreign-trained physicians are more likely than U.S.-trained physicians to practice in lower-income and disadvantaged communities. As such, nearly 21 million Americans live in areas of the U.S. where foreign-trained physicians account for at least half of all physicians. Furthermore, over the past 10 years, more than 10,000 J-1 IMGs have worked in underserved communities. By increasing the number of visas available to IMGs these vulnerable populations will be better served and the overall health care system will be bolstered.

The U.S. health care workforce relies upon physicians from other countries to provide high-quality and accessible patient care. As such, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be more critical than ever to ensure that the U.S. utilizes its immigration system to the fullest extent possible to help meet the growing U.S. health care needs and advance the nation's health security. Therefore, to enable 15,000 physicians to join our frontlines as quickly as possible, the AMA urges the Senate to pass the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Peter B. Angood, MD, FRCS(C), FACS, MCCM, FAAPL(Hon)
Association President & Chief Executive Officer