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June 15, 2020

The Honorable Susan Collins
U.S. Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Angus King
U.S. Senate
133 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Collins and Senator King:

On behalf of our 4,275 physician, resident and medical student members, Maine Medical Association would like to express our support for your legislation, **S.948** The Conrad State 30 & Physician Access Act (H.R. 2895), and **S.3599**, The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.

Conrad 30 has been a highly successful program, enabling underserved communities to recruit both primary care and specialty physicians after they complete their medical residency training. We applaud this bipartisan reauthorization of the program and for the recognition of the important role immigrating physicians play in our nation's health care infrastructure.

Our Association members are acutely aware of the current shortage of primary care physicians. Many communities in Maine have problems meeting their patient care needs and depend on the physicians in this program to provide health care services. This shortage was dramatically highlighted by the lack of physicians in certain key areas during the COVID-19 pandemic which forced many 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. The Conrad 30 program would ensure that physicians can continue to provide care for patients and have a lasting impact on the overall health of our communities.

In addition, we would like to ask for your support of **S.3599 The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act**. As you know, the U.S. health care workforce relies upon physicians from other countries to provide high-quality and accessible patient care. This bill would authorize immigrant visas for health care clinicians, including up to 15,000 physicians who are eligible to practice in the United States or are already in the country on temporary work visas. The visas would provide a pathway to employment-based green cards.

International Medical Graduates (IMGs) are an important part of our U.S. health care teams and already serve on medical front lines across the country. Moreover, IMGs play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable populations in the U.S. 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.

We are greatly appreciative that Congress has enacted four major legislative packages to address this unprecedented public health crisis and, while these programs are beginning to make a positive difference for physicians and their patients, more still needs to be done. The Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act will help ensure continued access to care in medically underserved communities across the U.S.

Maine Medical Association's mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine citizens. We appreciate your leadership, support your legislation on this important issue, and look forward to working with you to improve health care for all Americans. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Dan Morin, director of communications and government affairs at (207) 838-8613 or dmorin@mainemed.com.

Sincerely,

Andrew MacLean
Chief Executive Officer

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