



THE SOCIETY
FOR POST-ACUTE AND
LONG-TERM
CARE MEDICINE™

10500 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 210
Columbia, MD 21044-3596
(410) 740-9743

Washington DC
(301) 596-5774

Toll Free
(800) 876-AMDA

Fax
(410) 740-4572

www.paltc.org

President
David A. Nace, MD, MPH, CMD
Wexford, PA

President-Elect
Karl E. Steinberg, MD, HMDC, CMD
Oceanside, CA

Vice President
Suzanne M. Gillespie, MD, RD,
CMD, Canandaigua, NY

Immediate Past President
Arif Nazir, MD, FACP, CMD, AGSF
Louisville, KY

Treasurer
Jeffrey N. Nichols, MD, CMD
New York, NY

Secretary
Rajeev Kumar, MD, CMD, FACP
Warrenville, IL

Chair, House of Delegates
Wayne Saltsman, MD, PhD, CMD
Boston, MA

Executive Director
Christopher E. Laxton, CAE
Columbia, MD

June 1, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and
Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of AMDA-The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine's
5,500 members work in skilled nursing facilities, long-term care and assisted living
communities, CCRCs, home care, hospice, PACE programs, and other settings, I am
writing to express our strong support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act
(S.3599 & H.R. 6788). Specifically, this bill would recapture 40,000 unused
employment-based immigrant visas (25,000 for nurses, and 15,000 for physicians)
from prior fiscal years without displacing American workers.

At present, more than 30 percent of COVID-19 cases involve older people, who also
account for 45 percent of hospitalizations, 53 percent of intensive care unit (ICU)
admissions, and 80 percent of deaths. Nursing homes and assisted living facilities
alone account for 42 percent of COVID-19 deaths.

The US has long experienced a shortage of geriatricians, and the heightened demand
will only continue to grow and outpace supply in the coming years. Unfortunately,
the current pandemic has compounded the effect of this shortage of geriatricians who
serve the most chronically ill, and the most susceptible population to COVID-19 and
its complications. Geriatricians have been actively participating in strategizing
infection control practices and incorporating their expertise into developing facility
protocols to avoid in-house transmissions. In addition to providing support and
education to nursing home staff, geriatricians have developed treatment protocols
catering to the needs of the elderly population to avoid hospitalization of patients
with mild-moderate disease. International Medical Graduates (IMGs) working in
various clinical settings such as out-patient clinics, hospitals, assisted living facilities,
and nursing homes constitute almost half of the geriatric medicine's workforce, and
their service continue to be indispensable during these unprecedented times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has overwhelmed our nation's healthcare facilities and desperate measures have been employed to compensate for the shortage of physicians such as recalling retired physicians, expanding physicians' practice areas, and amending out of state licensing laws. However, visa restrictions that specify employers and worksites are preventing IMGs from being redeployed to COVID-19 hot-spots, where their skills and services are most needed. Additionally, due to their immigration status being tied to the physician's continued employment in the US, the dependent family members of foreign national physicians are faced with the threat of deportation should the physician die or become disabled. With public health officials predicting a spike in COVID-19 infection this fall, it is imperative to act swiftly and pass this bill, as it is not only a time-sensitive health care workforce policy to effectively respond to the pandemic, but also a humane gesture towards immigrant physicians and nurses who are working selflessly to provide the needed care to keep America healthy.

As we look to reopen a country that ensures we remain as safe, healthy, independent, and engaged as possible as we age, The Society is pleased to extend our support for the congress to pass S.3599. Please contact Alex Bardakh, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy at abardakh@paltc.org or 410-992-3132 should your need any further assistance from us in this regard.

Sincerely,



David A. Nace, MD, MPH, CMD
President



Christopher E. Laxton, CAE
Executive Director