



# UnityPoint Health

Government & External Affairs  
1776 West Lakes Parkway, Suite 400  
West Des Moines, IA 50266  
[www.unitypoint.org](http://www.unitypoint.org)

June 2, 2020

The Honorable Cheri Bustos  
United States House of Representatives  
1233 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for HR.6788, Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

*Submitted electronically via email*

Dear Congresswoman Bustos:

**UnityPoint Health (“UPH”) urges your support of HR.6788, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.** As a rural state, recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals is challenging. Immigrant healthcare professionals have answered the call to serve in U.S. rural and underserved communities, including Illinois communities. UPH employs immigrant physicians who have already satisfied the legal requirements for immigration to the U.S. but have been the subject of administrative backlogs for upwards of 10 years. These healthcare professionals are highly educated and not easily or quickly replaced. **For UPH, immigrant physicians are valued members of the UPH family, are embedded within our communities, and are mission critical to providing quality and timely care to our patients.** In the midst of the COVID pandemic, the need for a knowledgeable, experienced and stable healthcare workforce has never been more evident.

The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (“this Act”) offers a reasoned approach to assure the continuity of our valued essential healthcare professionals. Foremost, this Act is a bipartisan proposal. Second, this Act does not expand existing visas; rather, this Act directly addresses the administrative backlog of permanent residency applications for foreign-born nurses and doctors by recapturing and reallocating immigrant visas. In particular, this Act would recapture up to 25,000 immigrant visas for nurses and 15,000 immigrant visas for physicians. Third, this Act is limited in time to immigrant worker petitions filed up to 90 days after the President terminates the COVID-19 emergency declaration. And lastly, this Act includes workforce safeguards, such as equivalent education standards, English fluency, state licensure, and clean disciplinary records, and requires employers to attest that the immigrant worker has not, nor will, displace a United States worker.

UPH respectfully requests your support of HR.6788 as a small but vital measure in assuring Illinois and the nation retain a highly qualified and experienced healthcare workforce.

Sincerely,

David M. Williams, MD, MMM  
Chief Medical Officer  
UnityPoint Health

Keith E. Knepp, MD  
President and CEO  
UnityPoint Health – Central Illinois