



UnityPoint Health

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June 2, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for S.3599, Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

Submitted electronically via email

Dear Senator Duckworth:

UnityPoint Health (“UPH”) urges your support of S.3599, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, which is sponsored by Senator Durbin. 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 S.3599 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