

June 25, 2020

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AAPM&R Endorsement of the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 3599)

The American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R) endorses and has been actively advocating for Congress to include the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 3599) in any upcoming COVID-19 legislative package. Physiatry's contribution to COVID-19 recovery is unique and integral to ensuring that the many current and future patients who contract the virus can return to their optimal level of function. It is no secret that the nation has been facing a physician shortage,¹ even before COVID-19, which is affecting physicians and clinicians working with COVID-19 patients. As such, it is imperative that the physiatry workforce is enhanced during the COVID-19 crisis by recapturing unused immigrant visas.

AAPM&R has members who would directly benefit from the passage of S. 3599 as they await extraordinarily long lines for their green cards. According to one member, who is an Indian citizen and physiatrist working in West Virginia, the estimated wait time for his green card is over 40 years. This physiatrist is providing care to American patients in a rural area, an already underserved community. Ensuring physiatrists like him and others can continue to provide care will keep us from deepening the American physician shortage during the PHE and as the nation continues to recover from the pandemic.

¹ According to an Article in Human Resources for Health, it is estimated that in 2020 there is a shortage of 91,500 physicians. (Zhang, X; Lin, D; Pforsich, H; Lin, VW. *Physicians workforce in the United States of America: forecasting nationwide shortages*. Human Resources for Health. February 2020. Retrieved here: <https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-020-0448-3>





American Academy of
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

AAPM&R is the national medical specialty organization representing more than 9,000 physicians who are specialists in physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R). PM&R physicians, also known as physiatrists, treat a wide variety of medical conditions affecting the brain, spinal cord, nerves, bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, and tendons. PM&R physicians evaluate and treat injuries, illnesses, and disability, and are experts in designing comprehensive, patient-centered treatment plans. Physiatrists utilize cutting-edge as well as time-tested treatments to maximize function and quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T E Stautzenbach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Thomas E. Stautzenbach
Executive Director and CEO