

June 11, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue  
United States Senate  
455 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young  
United States Senate  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons  
United States Senate  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn  
United States Senate  
517 Hart Senate Office Building  
Building Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Perdue, Durbin, Young, Coons, Cornyn, and Leahy:

On behalf of the American Thoracic Society (ATS), I am writing to express our support for legislation you are sponsoring, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, S. 3599. The ATS is a multi-disciplinary society of 16,000 pulmonary, critical care and sleep specialists, many of whom are working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, treating patients with this disease and conducting critical research to improve our understanding of it and develop new diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. was facing a serious shortage of physicians, including pulmonary, critical and sleep specialists, largely due to the growth and aging of the population and the impending retirements of many physicians. COVID-19 has further highlighted our need to address our physician shortage and ensure International Medical Graduates (IMGs), are supported while providing care. This heightened demand for physicians will only continue to mount. Thus, increasing the number of visas that are available to IMGs, as proposed by S. 3599, is critical to addressing this growing shortage.

The ATS understands the critical role that IMGs play in the United States healthcare system. The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act would allow the recapture of 15,000 unused employment-

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GREGORY P. DOWNEY, MD, ATSF  
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based physician immigrant visas from prior fiscal years. These unused visas could go to IMG's who are needed in our response to COVID-19 and to further support U.S. physicians to meet the needs of their patients. The bill recognizes the urgency of the public health emergency by requiring the Department of Homeland Security and State Department to expedite the processing of recaptured visas, ensuring that clinicians are available to begin caring for patients as soon as possible.

The ATS fully supports the **Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, S. 3599** and urges the **U.S. Senate to pass this legislation**. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Juan C. Celedon, MD, DrPH, ATSF  
President  
American Thoracic Society

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