



*Representing Kentucky Hospitals and Health Systems*

July 10, 2020

Hon. Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate Majority Leader  
The Senate  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Majority Leader:

On behalf of our hospitals and health systems KHA encourages you to support the provisions of S. 3599, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, as you move forward in developing health care policies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill enjoys bi-partisan support and the changes it would make to the visa program would help to ensure that hospitals have proper staffing to address the current health crisis and beyond.

There has never been a more urgent need for the care that foreign-born physicians and foreign-trained nurses provide than during the current COVID-19 pandemic. These professionals play a critical role in ensuring the health of our communities, and they are required to meet rigid standards of equivalent education, English fluency, meet state licensure requirements; and, they must have clean disciplinary records.

Foreign-trained nurses do not displace American workers; in fact, the demand for nurses continues to grow and during the current health crisis the need is greater than ever. Many foreign-trained nurses are recruited to rural and inner-city hospitals, locations that find it more difficult to recruit domestically.

The foreign-born doctors this legislation assists with immigrant visas are already working in the United States so they will not displace any domestic doctors with this change. A targeted allocation of recaptured visas to these health care professionals will have a tremendous impact on the ability to care for patients with COVID-19, and it will have a lasting impact on the overall health of our communities.

Without this legislation, foreign-trained nurses will not be able to quickly enter the United States since the visa category for these professionals is currently exhausted. The physicians provided by assistance the provisions in the bill will gain flexibility in work assignment and will be better able to lend their skills where they are most needed.

As you have seen in your recent visits to our Kentucky hospitals, many rural hospitals would find it particularly difficult to operate without these foreign-born doctors and nurses.

KHA appreciates your leadership and understanding of the critical care foreign-trained and foreign-born physicians and nurses provide to Kentucky's hospitals and how urgent the need is for additional health care providers and flexibility with work assignments at this time. KHA always stands ready to act as a resource to assist in your efforts to improve health care policy for our people.

Thank you again for all that you and your superb staff are doing to help ensure continued access to quality health care for the people of Kentucky.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Galvagni". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Galvagni  
President  
Kentucky Hospital Association