



Ohio Rural
Health
Association

www.ohioruralhealth.org

September 11, 2020

The Honorable Bradley Schneider
United States House of Representatives
1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
United States House of Representatives
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Abby Finkenauer
United States House of Representatives
124 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Don Bacon
United States House of Representatives
1024 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Representatives Schneider, Finkenauer, Cole, and Bacon:

The Ohio Rural Health Association (ORHA) representing the health interests of rural Ohioans, applauds your bipartisan introduction of *the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* (H.R. 6788). Your bill would alleviate visa-based restrictions for international nurses and physicians who have trained in the United States, allowing these heroes to join the fight against the COVID-19 virus and diminish workforce shortages in rural America.

Health care workforce shortages that have plagued rural communities for decades have become exacerbated by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, 77 percent of rural counties were designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), and while approximately 20 percent of the nation's population lives in rural areas, only nine percent of U.S. physicians practice in rural America.

This important bipartisan legislation would allow tens of thousands of nurses and physicians to join the fight against COVID-19 and address the significant health care workforce shortages in rural America by recapturing unused immigrant visas that Congress has previously authorized and allocating those visas to international doctors and nurses who have trained in the United States. These heroes could improve access to high quality health care services in rural communities and allow them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises more effectively, and ultimately save lives.

ORHA strongly supports *the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and commends your efforts to protect rural health by working to bring thousands of qualified physicians and nurses to join the United States' health care workforce. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jo Ann Reilly, ORHA Legislative Chair: 937-707-0050, reillyjo@rocketmail.com. We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation and being stalwart champions for rural America.

Sincerely,



Jo Ann Reilly
Chair, Legislative Committee
Ohio Rural Health Association