



April 17, 2021

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I want to commend you on your leadership for reintroducing and sponsoring the bipartisan S. 1024, the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*. During this global pandemic, the role of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in augmenting the physician workforce is especially critical to the care of the thousands of patients battling COVID-19. This innovative legislation would recapture 40,000 unused visas and use them to provide additional green cards to 15,000 physicians and 25,000 professional nurses. The visas, which would not count towards the annual limit and would be recaptured from a pool of over 200,000 employment-based visas left unused between 1992 and 2020, would provide a pathway to employment-based green cards and quickly address one of the health care system's most pressing needs.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 163,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

By recapturing a limited number of unused visas from prior years and allocating them to doctors and nurses, the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* offers the advantage of not only addressing the physician shortage that existed before the pandemic but recognizing that the shortages are growing more severe as the need for caregivers becomes greater with each

passing day. It is an extremely timely response to the continued risk imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACP urges Congress to pass S. 1024 as such action would go a long way toward assuring the nation's health care workforce needs are met. The legislation would accomplish this by addressing joint workforce needs that have grown all the more critical, not only as a consequence of the increased number of physicians required to treat COVID-19 patients, but also those necessary to stand in for the physicians who have unfortunately contracted COVID-19 themselves and are unable to continue to serve in the workforce.

In conclusion, the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*, S. 1024, is a smart, bipartisan approach to the physician and nursing workforce shortage – both long and short term - that draws on an untapped resource. It would help save countless lives in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacqueline W. Fincher MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline W. Fincher, MD, MACP
President