



ARIZONA ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR ARIZONA

The Honorable Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 201510

The Honorable Mark Kelly
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 201510

Dear Senators Sinema & Kelly,

On behalf of the Arizona Academy of Family Physicians, which represents 2200 family physicians and medical students across the state of Arizona, I write to share our organization's support for S. 1024 / the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.

This legislation is a crucial step to address an immediate need presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members provide care to millions of patients annually, just in AZ. Family physicians are aware of the shortage of primary care physicians across the state and country and the important role that IMGs / International Medical Graduates play in addressing this shortage. The ability to recapture 15,000 unused employment-based physician immigrant visas from prior fiscal years would enable our members to have the support the need and our patients would have the care they deserve.

IMGs play a vital role in care for some of the most vulnerable populations in the U.S. IMGs make up more than 22% of active family physicians in the AAFP and are more likely to practice in rural, low socio-economic status and non-white communities. By increasing the number of visas available to IMGs these vulnerable populations will be better served and the overall health care system will be bolstered.

In addition to our support for your legislation, the AAFP supports the Conrad 30 J-1 visa waiver program, whose authorization expires on Sept. 30, to further help alleviate ongoing physician shortages and ensure the long term health care needs of communities across our country are met. We ask that Congress act this fiscal year to extend the authorization and improve the Conrad 30 program. Currently, residents from other countries working in the U.S. on J-1 visa waivers are required to return to their home countries after their residency has ended for 2 years before applying for another visa or green card. The Conrad 30 program allows these physicians to remain in the U.S. without having to return home if they agree to practice in an underserved area for 3 years.

If you have questions for us please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Laura Dearing at 602-663-1806. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray grid background. The signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read "W Thrift".

William Thrift, MD, FAAFP, President
Arizona Academy of Family Physicians