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May 6, 2021

The Honorable Senator Joshua Hawley
The Honorable Representative Ann Wagner
The Honorable Representative Emanuel Cleaver II
The Honorable Representative Billy Long
The Honorable Representative Jason Smith
The Honorable Representative Cori Bush
The Honorable Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer
The Honorable Representative Sam Graves
The Honorable Representative Vicky Hartzler

Re: Support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

Dear Senator Hawley and Representatives of the Missouri Congressional delegation,

On behalf of our physician and medical student members, the Missouri State Medical Association is writing to voice support for the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S.1024).

The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act is bipartisan legislation from Sens. Durbin, Cornyn, Leahy, Young, Coons, and Collins designed to address the shortage of physicians and nurses and augment the nation's health care workforce. Specifically, the bill allows the recapture of 15,000 immigrant visas for physicians as well as 25,000 visas for nurses. The bill further authorizes visas to be issued for the immediate families of these physicians and nurses; however, these visas would not count toward the 40,000 limit.

The United States has been experiencing a shortage of physicians for years. Like other states, Missouri's health care system depends heavily on International Medical Graduates (IMGs) to help fill a critical workforce need, especially in rural and other underserved areas. However, their value has never been more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic. IMGs are serving on the state's medical front lines and providing access to high-quality, life-saving care. Furthermore, in the wake of the pandemic, the ability to recapture 15,000 unused employment-based physician immigrant visas from prior fiscal years will prove invaluable as patients return to see their physicians for preventive care and delayed elective procedures. In short, an increase would help enable all physicians to have the support they need and all patients to have the care they deserve, now and beyond COVID-19.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Howell
Executive Vice President