



June 14, 2021

1520 Pacific Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94109
TEL: 415.345.8667
FAX: 415.345.8668
EMAIL: cafp@familydocs.org
www.familydocs.org

Re: H.R 2255/S.1024 – Support

Dear California Congressional Delegation:

The California Academy of Family Physicians (CAFP) and our more than 10,000 family physicians and medical students wish to express our support for the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* (H.R 2255/S. 1024).

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

IMGs play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable populations in California and in the U.S. IMGs make up more than 22 percent of active family physicians, and they are more likely to practice in rural, low socio-economic status, and non-white communities.¹² In fact, IMGs are twice as likely to practice in health professional shortage areas.³ 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.

CAFP also supports the Conrad 30 J-1 visa waiver program, whose authorization expires on September 30, to further help alleviate ongoing physician shortages and ensure the long-term health care needs of communities across our country are met. We are encouraged by the introduction of the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and urge Congress to also act this fiscal year to extend the authorization and improve the Conrad 30 program.

Currently, resident physicians from other countries working in the U.S. on J-1 visa waivers are required to return to their home country after their residency has ended for two years before they can apply 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 three years. Many communities, including rural and low-income urban districts, have problems meeting their patient care

¹ <https://www.aamc.org/system/files/2020-06/stratcomm-aamc-physician-workforce-projections-june-2020.pdf>

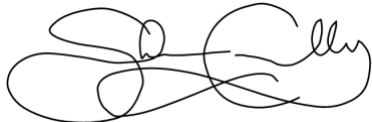
² <https://www.ama-assn.org/education/international-medical-education/how-imgs-have-changed-face-american-medicine>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4370780/>

needs and depend on the physicians in this program to provide health care services. With communities across the country facing physician shortages, the Conrad 30 program ensures that physicians who are often educated and trained in the U.S. can continue to provide care for patients during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

CAFP applauds the introduction of the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and stands ready to help this important piece of legislation be enacted. If you have questions, please contact Catrina Reyes, Vice President of Advocacy and Policy, at creyes@familydocs.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Connolly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shannon" and last name "Connolly" clearly distinguishable.

Shannon Connolly, MD, FAAFP
President, California Academy of Family Physicians