
June 1, 2021

The Honorable Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Sen. Burr:

On behalf of the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians (NCAFP), representing over 4,300 family medicine physicians, residents, and medical students throughout North Carolina, we request your support for S. I024/H.R.2255 (*the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act*), a bill designed to enhance the United States' physician workforce during the COVID-19 crisis by recapturing unused immigrant visas. If passed, this legislation will serve rural communities and vulnerable populations in North Carolina by addressing primary care workforce shortages through the use of capable and willing International Medical Graduates (IMGs).

This legislation is a crucial step to address an immediate need presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. IMGs play a vital role in caring for some of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. IMGs make up more than 22 percent of active family physicians, and they are more likely to practice in rural and low socio-economic status communities. IMGs are twice as likely to practice in health professional shortage areas. 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.

As we deal with the ramifications of 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. While efforts continue to enhance traditional forms of physician workforce development, particularly in the areas of funding for graduate medical education and teaching health centers, it goes without question that S. I024/H.R.2255 will help address the primary care workforce shortage need that exists.

The NCAFP appreciates your consideration and support of the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and stands ready to assist you and your staff in any way to ensure accessibility to the highest quality primary care possible for the citizens of North Carolina. Please contact our Executive Vice President, Gregory K. Griggs, MPA, CAE (ggriggs@ncafp.com), should you need any additional information or wish to discuss this issue any further.

With best regards,



Jessica L. Triche, MD, FAAFP
President
NC Academy of Family Physicians