



August 26, 2021

The Honorable Senator Deb Fischer
454 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Senator Ben Sasse
139 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for S.1024 Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act

Senators Fischer & Sasse,

We write to you on behalf of Bryan Health, a Lincoln, Nebraska based health system with five campuses located in both urban and rural settings across the state of Nebraska, expressing our support for **S.1024, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act** (the "Act").

The Act introduced by Senators Durbin (D-IL), Cornyn (R-TX), Leahy (D-VT), Young (R-IN), Coons (D-DE), and Collins (R-ME), would allow for the recapturing of 25,000 unused immigrant visas for nurses and 15,000 unused visas for doctors by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. The Act would also exempt these visas from country caps, require employer attestation that these visas would not displace American workers, require the Department of Homeland Security and State Department to expedite the processing of recaptured visas, and limit the filing period for the proposed visas to 90 days following the termination of the President's COVID-19 emergency declaration.

Nebraska health systems need this boost to the workforce. As you know, our state is comprised of a majority of rural communities with two large metropolitan areas in the eastern part of the state. Much of the state is being served by critical access hospitals. It is in these rural communities that the provider and nursing shortage is felt most severely. There are 6 counties in Nebraska that report no registered nurses and an additional 6 that report having only 1 registered nurse to serve the county. The current Nebraska nursing shortage sits at 4,192 nurses needed with an expected increase to 5,436 needed by 2025. Regarding doctors, in 2020 it was reported that 14 out of Nebraska's 93 counties did not have a primary care doctor. To demonstrate the specialty provider shortage, 54 counties do not have an OB/GYN doctor.

Immigrant nurses and doctors are an integral part of the health care system. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified the doctor and nursing shortage across the nation and within our state. This legislation will begin to aid us in addressing the health care workforce challenges we currently face here in Nebraska and across the nation. We hope you will join us in support of S.1024.

Sincerely,

Russ Gronewold
Bryan Health President & CEO

John Woodrich
Bryan Health Executive Vice President &
Bryan Medical Center CEO