

April 30, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue  
United States Senate  
455 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Todd Young  
United States Senate  
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senate  
711 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Coons  
United States Senate  
218 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Perdue, Senator Durbin, Senator Young and Senator Coons:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 physicians, 2 million nurses, 9,800 nurse leaders and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the American Organization for Nursing Leadership (AONL) are writing to strongly support the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.

There has never been a more urgent need for the care that foreign-born physicians and foreign-trained nurses provide than during the current COVID-19 pandemic. These professionals play a critical role in ensuring the health of our communities, and they are required to meet rigid standards of equivalent education, English fluency and state licensure, and must have clean disciplinary records. Foreign-trained nurses do not displace American workers; in fact, the demand for nurses continues to grow. Many foreign-trained nurses are recruited to rural and inner-city hospitals, locations that find it more difficult to recruit domestically. The foreign-born doctors your legislation assists with immigrant visas are already working in the United States so they will not displace any domestic doctors with this change.

A targeted allocation of recaptured visas to these health care professionals will have a tremendous impact on the ability to care for patients with COVID-19, and it will have a lasting impact on the overall health of our communities. Without your legislation, foreign-trained nurses will not be able to quickly enter the United States since the visa category for these professionals is currently exhausted. The physicians provided assistance will gain flexibility in work assignment and will be better able to lend their skills where they are most needed.

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We thank you for your understanding of the critical care foreign-trained and foreign-born physicians and nurses provide to Americans across the country and how urgent the need is for additional health care providers and flexibility with work assignments at this time. We look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

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Thomas P. Nickels  
Executive Vice President  
American Hospital Association

Robyn Begley  
Chief Executive Officer, AONL  
Senior Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, AHA