

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Durbin, Cornyn, Leahy, Young, Coons and Collins:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinical partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) writes in support of the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act.

Ensuring an adequate supply of physicians and nurses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is paramount. The U.S. continues to see significant increases in the number of COVID-19 patients in many communities. In those communities, the health care system is becoming stressed, and in some areas, hospitals are again reaching their full capacity.

Your bipartisan legislation would address unprecedented health care worker shortages across the country, a foundational issue for our nation. The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 1024/H.R. 2255) would expedite the visa authorization process for highly-trained nurses, who could support hospitals facing staffing shortages and ensure hospitals are better positioned to provide patient care.



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The legislation also would provide protections to U.S.-trained, international physicians who are vitally important to patient care in their communities but whose visa status puts them at heightened risk should they get sick. Under current law, if these physicians were to get sick and be unable to work, it could jeopardize their status in this country. Their status also limits their flexibility to provide care where they are most needed. The legislation addresses these vulnerabilities by ensuring these front-line physicians are provided certainty and stability in their visa status to continue providing patient care during the pandemic.

Qualified international nurses and physicians are essential providers of patient care, and they are critical to our battle against COVID-19. The legislation recognizes their critical role and contributions to our nation. We look forward to working with you on the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Stacey Hughes
Executive Vice President