

December 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-222
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. Capitol Building, H-204
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician 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) urges Congress to ensure an adequate supply of physicians and nurses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As we continue to see significant increases in the number of COVID-19 patients across the country, America's health care system is becoming more stressed, and hospitals and health systems are reaching their full capacity. While there may be alternative care sites for patient care available in certain communities, the limitation for providing care is the availability of health care providers, including nurses and physicians.

Bipartisan legislation pending before Congress would address health care worker shortages across the country. The Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (H.R. 6788/S.3599) would expedite the visa authorization process for highly-trained nurses who could support hospitals facing staffing shortages, ensuring hospitals are better positioned to provide patient care.

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 patient care where they are most needed. This 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.



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As we've seen since the pandemic began, immigrant nurses and physicians are essential providers of patient care, and they are critical to our battle against COVID-19. This legislation recognizes their critical role and contributions to our nation. We urge you to support this bipartisan legislation and include it in forthcoming COVID-19 legislation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President