



COLLEGE of AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Klobuchar and Collins:

On behalf of the College of American Pathologists (CAP), the world's largest organization of board-certified pathologists and leading provider of laboratory accreditation and proficiency testing programs, I want to thank you for reintroducing the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (S. 665), which would reauthorize the Conrad 30 waiver program for three years, make improvements to the program, and increase the number of waivers granted to each state. This program incentivizes qualified international medical graduates (IMGs) to serve in underserved communities and is critical to help address the physician workforce shortage.

The United States is facing a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034. IMGs are an important part of our nation's health care system and currently represent 25% of the physician workforce. The percentage of first year pathology resident slots were non-U.S. IMGs was 33.3% in 2022 and 30.1% in 2023. Non-U.S. IMGs play a critical role in providing health care, especially in areas of the country with higher rates of poverty and chronic disease. Accordingly, the entry of every IMG is in the national interest of the U.S. especially during the current crisis, when physicians are needed in every specialty now more than ever.

Under current law, J-1 visas require IMGs to return to their country of origin for at least two years upon completion of their residency, unless a Conrad 30 waiver is obtained. This two-year home country requirement places strain on the hiring process for United States trained physicians and has caused practices to miss out on the opportunity to bring on qualified candidates. Data from the CAP's 2022 Practice Leader Survey shows that visa issues impacted 25% of practice leaders' hiring decisions, with 10% of those reporting that they were unable to hire certain candidates, and 20% reporting that they did not even consider certain candidates due to visa issues. After investing resources to train IMGs in the United States, it is prudent that those that wish to stay, and practice should be able to do so. IMGs that are forced to return to their home country may also never come back to the United States to practice.

The Conrad 30 waiver program is an important program that provides IMGs the opportunity to work in underserved communities. For agreeing to the terms, IMGs will not have to leave the U.S. for two years before they are eligible to apply for an immigrant visa or permanent residence, thus allowing them to begin to provide necessary patient care upon finishing their residency. The CAP supports and urges passage of the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act (S. 665),



COLLEGE of AMERICAN PATHOLOGISTS

which will increase the number of waivers for a state from 30 to 35 and in turn help to alleviate the physician workforce shortage, while also expanding access to critical patient care in underserved communities.

The CAP appreciates your leadership on this issue and looks forward to working with you to advance this legislation. Should you have questions please contact Hannah Burriss at hburriss@cap.org or via phone at 202-354-7139.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Emily E. Volk".

Emily E. Volk, MD, FCAP
President, College of American Pathologists