July 29, 2022

Dear Chair Nadler and Ranking Member Jordan,

The 63 undersigned organizations respectfully urge you to consider and pass S.1810/ H.R. 3541, the Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act before the end of the 117th Congress.

Regardless of geographic location, all patients deserve access to quality healthcare. Across practices and specialties, our country is facing a severe shortage of physicians, especially in rural areas. For nearly three decades the Conrad 30 waiver program has helped Americans in rural and underserved areas receive medical care from more than 15,000 high-quality physicians in their local communities. This program is especially critical for specialties that train a high number of international medical graduates (IMGs) who rely on J-1 visas. Without a Conrad 30 waiver, these visas would require United States-trained physicians to return to their country of origin for at least two years, thus prohibiting them from practicing domestically upon completion of their residency and placing their ability to ever practice in the United States in doubt. These IMGs play a vital role in providing greater access to health care for millions of patients, particularly in historically underserved communities who have also been hit hard by the current global health care crisis.

The Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act would reauthorize this crucial program for three years, make several targeted improvements to the program, and permit the gradual expansion of the number of waivers granted to each state. This program was previously expanded once before, but the number of waivers has remained stagnant for the last two decades, despite our health care workforce shortage becoming more severe. As the significant impacts of “Long COVID”, i.e., post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), are emerging for millions of Americans, having a sufficient workforce to address the additional demand for care is critical. The Conrad 30 program provides an opportunity for IMG physicians who complete their residency in the United States to immediately provide necessary care in underserved locations. The bipartisan reforms included in this legislation are essential to helping combat the healthcare workforce shortage especially as we are entering a period with a rapidly increasing demand for physicians.

Additionally, the current program is designed in a flexible way that allows each state to customize their 30-waiver allocation under the program to address their unique needs. We support the reauthorization and strengthening of this program as one of many policy solutions to curtail the ongoing medical provider workforce challenges across the country.

The Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Reauthorization Act has tremendous support in Congress with the Senate and House bills garnering 26 and 110 bipartisan cosponsors respectively. In addition, the legislation has earned the support of a broad range of constituencies, including patients, physicians, hospitals, and immigration organizations. The undersigned organizations urge you to act expeditiously and pass S. 1810/H.R. 3541 before the conclusion of the 117th Congress in order to immediately
improve the physician workforce shortage and enhance patients’ access to quality care across the country. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Hallie Koch (hkoch@aan.com), Government Relations Program Manager, or Derek Brandt (dbrandt@aan.com), Director of Congressional Affairs at the American Academy of Neurology.

Sincerely,

AHS
Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy
Alliance for Patient Access
ALS Association
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Home Care Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodagnostic Medicine
American Brain Coalition
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Rheumatology
American College of Surgeons
American Epilepsy Society
American Gastroenterological Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Hospital Association
American Medical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Society for Radiation Oncology
American Society of Anesthesiologists
Anxiety and Depression Association of America
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of University Professors of Neurology
Child Neurology Society
Cohen Veterans Bioscience
College of American Pathologists
Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
Epilepsy Association of Central Florida, Inc.
Federation of American Hospitals
HD Reach
Hope for HIE
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Hydrocephalus Association