

Co-Sponsor the Bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 3211/H.R. 6205)

The COVID-19 pandemic deeply challenged the entire health care continuum: the industry is grappling with a historic workforce crisis, financial challenges, and closures of communities and centers across the country. The health care workforce continues to experience significant shortages while the demand for services has increased, and there's no end in sight to this trend. Projections show the country will require an additional 3.5 million long term care (LTC) health workers by 2030 to satisfy the demands of a growing population.¹

At the same time, LTC communities are struggling to recover from the pandemic, which impacted LTC more than any other health care setting with a cumulative loss of 416,000 workers.² Despite providers' best efforts to recruit and retain staff, the profession has only recovered 71% of its workforce and still needs more than 124,200 workers to return to pre-pandemic levels—and this does not factor in the growing demand for skilled care as the nation grows older.³ Now, more than ever, we need policymakers to focus on efforts that will bolster and rebuild our LTC workforce.

The American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) has long been supportive of our nation's immigrants that make up a strong portion of the LTC workforce. In fact, approximately 1 in 4 direct care workers were born outside the United States.⁴ For these reasons and because of the severe workforce shortage, **AHCA/NCAL strongly supports the bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 3211/H.R. 6205)**, which would recapture unused visas from previous fiscal years for doctors, nurses, and their families.

Introduced by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Kevin Cramer (R-ND) as well as Representatives Brad Schneider (D-IL-10), Yadira Caraveo (D-CO-08), Don Bacon (R-NE-02), and Tom Cole (R-OK-04) in the House, this legislation allows the entry of nurses with approved immigrant visas and allows physicians with approved immigrant petitions to adjust their status, ensuring they have a durable immigration status. In addition to setting aside these previously unused visas for physicians and nurses, S. 3211/H.R. 6205 also would require the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and State Department to expedite the processing of recaptured visas for highly trained professionals. Ensuring an adequate supply of nurses and physicians as we face workforce shortages is critical, and **we ask that members of Congress join their colleagues in cosponsoring this bill today.**

It is also important to note that AHCA/NCAL has led and endorsed various efforts to expediate immigrant visa processing to bring healthcare workers to the U.S. The association has also been working closely with national refugee organizations, noting our doors are open to individuals who are new to our country that would like to have a career in LTC

1 - Institute of Medicine. (2008). Retooling for an aging America: Building the health care workforce. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

2 - National Employment industry Trends. (March 2024). BLS Data. <https://www.bls.gov/ces/>.

3 - National Employment industry Trends. (March 2024). BLS Data. <https://www.bls.gov/ces/>.

4 - Sources: PHI. "Workforce Data Center." Last modified September 2023. <https://phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.

If you have any questions around the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act or the workforce efforts AHCA/NCAL is focused on, please contact AHCA/NCAL's Associate Vice President of Constituency Services & Workforce, Dana Ritchie at dritchie@ahca.org.

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