

# Co-Sponsor the Bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 1024/H.R. 2255)

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It is no secret that long-term care (LTC) provider communities, which include skilled nursing facilities (SNF) and assisted living (AL) centers have been inordinately impacted by ravages of the pandemic. While the clinical outlook for these communities continues to improve, the operational challenges they face are worse than ever.

Due to the pandemic LTC facilities are facing a historic labor crisis, losing more than 406,000 caregivers since the beginning of the pandemic, and workforce levels are at a 15-year low.<sup>1</sup> SNF and AL communities are facing some of the worst job losses among all health care professions, and the shortage is impacting access to care for our nation's seniors and individuals with disabilities. Projections show the country will require an additional 3.5 million long-term care health workers by 2030 to maintain current staff-to-care recipient ratios.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there have been an unprecedented level of LTC centers shuttered across the country mostly due to staffing shortages or financial challenges. Simply put, LTC closures are devastating to residents, their families, staff and the entire health care system.

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 U.S.<sup>3</sup> For these reasons, **AHCA/NCAL strongly supports the bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act (S. 1024/H.R. 2255)**, which would recapture unused visas from previous fiscal years for doctors, nurses, and their families. This legislation allows the entry of nurses with approved immigrant visas and allows physicians with approved immigrant petitions to adjust their status, so that they can help our nation fight COVID-19 and have a durable immigration status. In addition to setting aside these previously unused visas for physician and nurses, S. 1024/H.R. 2255 also would require the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and State Department to expedite the processing of recaptured visas for highly trained nurses. Ensuring an adequate supply of nurses and physicians as we work to get through the COVID-19 pandemic is critical, and **we ask that members of Congress cosponsor this bill today if not on already.**

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 center doors are open to those new to our country that would like to have a career in LTC. AHCA/NCAL also supports immigration reform.

If you have any questions around the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act or some of the workforce efforts AHCA/NCAL is focused on, please contact AHCA/NCAL's Dana Ritchie at [dritchie@ahca.org](mailto:dritchie@ahca.org).

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1 - American Health Care Association (AHCA). (2022). BLS March 2022 jobs report. Retrieved from:

<https://www.ahcanal.org/News-and-Communications/Fact-Sheets/FactSheets/BLS-MARCH2022-JOBS-REPORT.pdf>

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

3 - Sources: <http://phinational.org/resource/direct-care-worker-disparities-key-trends-and-challenges/>,

PHI. "Workforce Data Center." Last modified September 2, 2021. <https://phinational.org/policy-research/workforce-data-center/>.



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