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February 8, 2024

The Honorable Troy E. Nehls
House of Representatives
1104 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brad Schneider
House of Representatives
300 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Representative Nehls and Representative Schneider,

The Society of Hospital Medicine, representing the nation's hospitalists, is writing to voice our support for the Directing Our Country's Transfer of Residency Slots (DOCTORS) Act of 2024 (H.R. 6980). This legislation will help address nationwide physician shortages by reallocating unused waivers from the Conrad 30 waiver program to states that use their full allotment.

Hospitalists are front-line physicians in America's acute care hospitals and focus on the general medical care of hospitalized patients. Nearly 80% of hospital medicine physician practices report unfilled positions, with on average 10% of their positions remaining open. Staffing shortages, resulting from a culmination of factors, such as burnout, COVID-19 turnover, and Medicare payment cuts, has demonstrated the urgent need to expand our physician workforce. These challenges, coupled with the existing nationwide physician shortage, are felt most severely in rural and underserved communities.

The Conrad State 30 Program helps to alleviate physician shortages in rural and underserved communities by allowing resident physicians here on visas, many of whom were trained in the United States, to remain in the country if they work for a minimum of three years in an underserved area. Since the initial authorization of this program in 1995, upwards of 15,000 physicians have been able to stay in the United States and continue to serve their patients and communities.

While each state receives 30 waivers each year under the Conrad 30 program, some waivers remain unused. For example, 376 waivers were unused in fiscal year 2021. The DOCTORS Act would help redistribute some of these unused waivers the following year. This would allow our nation to retain more physicians without increasing the number of visas allocated for this program. Passing the DOCTORS Act will improve medical care access in rural and underserved communities and we are pleased to support this legislation.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris Rehm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kris Rehm, MD, SFHM
President, Society of Hospital Medicine