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The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our support for S. 616, the "Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Act," which would permanently reauthorize and make improvements to the J-1 visa waiver program.

Many communities, including rural and low-income urban areas, have problems attracting physicians to meet their health care needs. To address these unmet needs, many of these communities have turned to international medical graduates. International medical graduates comprise approximately 27 percent of residents and fellows in the United States and 25 percent of all practicing physicians. The use of J-1 visa waivers is a significant means of placing physicians in communities that face health care access challenges.

The permanent reauthorization of the J-1 visa waiver program will provide incentives for physicians to practice in medically underserved areas without the uncertainty that the program will be discontinued. We also support provisions in this bill that would make improvements to the program, including exempting physicians upon completion of their service requirement from green card caps, requiring more transparency in employment contract terms, creating additional waivers per state for academic medical centers, and establishing a mechanism to increase the current cap on the number of visa waivers per state. In addition, the bill would make improvements to the immigration laws impacting international medical graduates outside of the J-1 visa waiver program.

The "Conrad State 30 and Physician Access Act" will help aid continued access to care in medically underserved communities across the U.S.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

James L. Madara, MD