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NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

May 3, 2021

The Honorable Bradley Schneider
United States House of Representatives
1432 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
United States House of Representatives
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Representatives Schneider and Cole:

The National Rural Health Association (NRHA), a nonprofit organization of 21,000 members that represents the health interests of rural Americans, applauds your bipartisan introduction of the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* (H.R. 2255). Your bill would alleviate visa-based restrictions for international nurses and physicians who have trained in the United States, allowing these heroes to join the fight against the COVID-19 virus and diminish workforce shortages in rural America.

Health care workforce shortages that have plagued rural communities for decades have become exacerbated by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. As of March 31, 2021, 61 percent of rural counties are designated Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA). While approximately 20 percent of the nation's population lives in rural areas, only eleven percent of U.S. physicians practice in rural America.

This important bipartisan legislation would allow tens of thousands of nurses and physicians to join the fight against COVID-19 and address the significant health care workforce shortages in rural America by recapturing unused immigrant visas that Congress has previously authorized and allocating those visas to international doctors and nurses who have trained in the United States. These heroes could improve access to high quality health care services in rural communities, allow them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises more effectively, and ultimately save lives.

NRHA strongly supports the *Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act* and commends your efforts to protect rural health by working to bring thousands of qualified physicians and nurses to join the United States' health care workforce. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call Josh Jorgensen at 202-639-0550 or by email at jjorgensen@nrharural.org. We thank you for sponsoring this important legislation and being stalwart champions for rural America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Morgan", is written over a light grey circular stamp.

Alan Morgan
Chief Executive Officer