



Today, America's frontline physicians, representing more than 600,000 physicians and medical students, are speaking out to protect our fellow physicians who provide crucial health care services that we cannot afford to be without during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our members care for our nation's children, pregnant women, adults, and elderly, covering a full range of physical, mental, and behavioral health conditions. We appreciate the vital role that International Medical Graduate physicians (IMGs) hold for our patients and our health care workforce. We call on the Administration and Congress to take immediate action to ensure that IMGs practicing in the U.S. and those seeking to begin residency training this summer are able to serve their communities and meet the nation's health care workforce needs.

IMGs fill critical gaps in care that are especially imperative during the COVID-19 pandemic. They often work in underserved and rural areas to meet their waiver requirements before applying for permanent resident status. Like all physicians practicing medicine during the pandemic, IMGs are answering the call every day to care for their patients while facing shortages of personal protective equipment and diagnostic testing. Compounding fear of personal safety is the uncertainty of visa status.

As our nation continues to experience a workforce shortage in the midst of a pandemic, we urge the Administration and Congress to support the IMG workforce by expediting processing of H-1B visas for IMGs; prioritizing change of status applications for those on O-1, J-1, and H-1B visas; and granting an automatic one-year extension of H-4 visas for spouses and dependent children of IMGs. The IMGs who have sacrificed so much to better the lives of U.S. patients should not be separated from their families, especially during a pandemic.

Further delays in visa processing will unnecessarily compromise the nation's COVID-19 response, needlessly endanger vulnerable patient populations, and will place even greater pressure on those serving heroically in this effort. It is imperative that IMGs be allowed to continue their important work on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic without fear of the loss of their immigration status, or that of their families.

About the American Academy of Family Physicians

Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 134,600 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the only medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits -- that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit www.aafp.org/media. For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, www.familydoctor.org.

About the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.

About the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of 60,000 members, ACOG strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. www.acog.org

About the American College of Physicians

The [American College of Physicians](http://www.acp.org) is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States with members in more than 145 countries worldwide. ACP membership includes 159,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Follow ACP on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/acpinternists) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/acpinternists) @acpinternists and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/acpinternists).

About the American Osteopathic Association

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) represents more than 151,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students; promotes public health; encourages scientific research; serves as the primary certifying body for DOs; and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. To learn more about DOs and the osteopathic philosophy of medicine, visit www.DoctorsThatDO.org.

About the American Psychiatric Association

The American Psychiatric Association, founded in 1844, is the oldest medical association in the country. The APA is also the largest psychiatric association in the world with 38,800 physician members specializing in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and research of mental illnesses. APA's vision is to ensure access to quality psychiatric diagnosis and treatment. For more information please visit www.psychiatry.org.