



INTERNAL MEDICINE | Doctors for Adults®

January 26, 2012

The Honorable Kent Conrad
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Conrad:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), representing 132,000 internists and medical students who specialize in the primary and comprehensive care of adolescents and adults, I am writing to applaud your efforts to expand and permanently reauthorize the Conrad State 30 J-1 visa waiver program through the “Conrad State 30 Improvement Act” (S.1979). The College has long recognized the value of international medical graduates (IMG’s) and their contributions to health care delivery in this country. Many IMGs provide care in medically underserved areas by participating in J-1 visa waiver programs, including Conrad 30.

The College supports your proposed reforms in S.1979 including, eliminating the need for repeated reauthorization of the Conrad 30 program. The College is also supportive of the provision in your legislation that will increase the number of Conrad 30 J-1 waivers to address the increased demand for such waivers by states, while maintaining a well-balanced national distribution. We are also pleased that you included our recommendation to allow a 120 day grace period for new employment if a physician is terminated due to extenuating circumstances. In addition, your proposed green card cap exemption would provide an important incentive for international medical graduates to practice in underserved communities.

Based on feedback from our members who are current or former Conrad State 30 participants, we continue to urge you to include the following additional changes to your legislation.

- A universal and simplified state and federal J-1 visa application process
- Distribution of J-1 visa physicians in the most medically underserved areas based on the total population of the state instead of the current set number of 30 physicians per state regardless of need and population
- A mechanism to report and investigate possible work-related abuses encountered by IMG physicians without fear of retribution

The College thanks you for your leadership on this important matter and your sustained commitment to expanding access to physicians in medically underserved areas. Pending your willingness to address our suggestions, as noted above, we would be pleased to fully endorse your legislation and look forward to working with you to advance it through Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Virginia Hood".

Virginia Hood, MBBS, MPH, FACP
President