



## Conrad 30 Waiver program

Currently, resident physicians from other countries working in the U.S. on J-1 visas are required to return to their home country after their residency has ended for two years before they can apply for another visa or green card. The Conrad 30 program allows these physicians to remain in the U.S. without having to return home if they agree to practice in an underserved area for three years. Many communities, including rural and low-income urban districts, have problems meeting their patient care needs and depend on the physicians in this program to provide health care services. With communities across the country facing physician shortages, the Conrad 30 program ensures that physicians who are often educated and trained in the U.S. can continue to provide care for patients.

Legislation is needed to reauthorize and improve the Conrad 30 Waiver program to protect patient access to care in medically underserved areas.

### Physician green card backlog

There is currently a sizable backlog of international medical graduates (IMGs), primarily from India and China, seeking green cards for permanent residency in the U.S. These physicians are actively practicing in the U.S., but have been waiting to receive their green card due to a massive backlog caused by the per-country limitations imposed by law. Many of these have physicians served in the Conrad 30 program.

These IMG physicians provide important medical services to communities in need. They often choose primary-care specialties and work in areas of the country with higher rates of poverty.

Not only does the backlog present a problem for physicians who are waiting on their residential status—some of whom have been waiting for several years—but workforce experts have predicted that the U.S. will face a significant physician shortage for both primary care and specialty physicians in the decade to come due to the growth of the aging population. This will disproportionately affect areas of the country that are already experiencing a physician shortage.

### Patient access and Conrad 30 reauthorization legislation

Ask your senators and representatives to support legislation to reauthorize and improve the Conrad 30 program by requiring more transparency in employment contract terms, creating additional waivers per states, and protecting spouses and children of physicians in the program.

Further, such legislation should address the current physician green card backlog by allowing physicians who work in underserved areas or a VA medical facility for five years to be eligible for a green card and exempt from the current per-country cap on employment-based green cards.

This legislation would help to alleviate growing physician shortages and improve patient access to care in underserved communities.

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