

May 4, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pence
Vice President
United States of America
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-226, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-255, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Vice President Pence, Speaker Pelosi, House Minority Leader McCarthy, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, and Senate Minority Leader Schumer:

The undersigned health professions organizations urge you to take regulatory or legislative action to maintain work authorization for individuals currently in Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Nearly 30,000 DACA recipients work as health care professionals across the United States. Rescinding DACA and the corresponding work authorizations for these providers would reduce our nation's health care capacity at a time we can ill-afford to lose valuable personnel.

As 33 health professional education organizations informed the Supreme Court in an October 2019 amicus brief:

The risk of a pandemic ... continues to grow, since infectious diseases can spread around the globe in a matter of days due to increased urbanization and international travel. These conditions pose a threat to America's health security—its preparedness for and ability to withstand incidents with public-health consequences. To ensure health security, the country needs a robust health workforce. Rescinding DACA, however, would deprive the public of domestically educated, well-trained, and otherwise qualified health care professionals who have been provided education in reliance on their ability to continue to work in the United States as health care professionals. [citations omitted]

The COVID-19 pandemic also illuminates longstanding social, economic, and health inequities in the United States that DACA can help address. Health professionals with DACA status encompass a diverse, multiethnic population, who are often bilingual and more likely to practice in underserved communities.

We urge the Administration to expeditiously announce plans to retain the DACA program during the COVID-19 national emergency regardless of the Supreme Court's upcoming decision. Additionally, we urge Congress to include a more permanent fix in the fourth COVID-19 emergency supplemental, such as the bipartisan Dream Act of 2019 (S. 874) or the House-passed American Dream and Promise Act of 2019 (H.R. 6). These bills would ensure that undocumented young people are able to continue their employment, education, training, and research in the health professions.

Our organizations are dedicated to promoting a health and biomedical workforce that leads to improved care and health equity for all. To meet the current health care needs of patients across the country, immediate regulatory or legislative action to retain DACA during the COVID-19 national emergency is necessary. Thank you for your continued support of the nation's health workforce and your efforts to combat the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Anatomy
American Association of Chairs of Departments of Psychiatry
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training
American College of Academic Addiction Medicine
American College of Healthcare Executives
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Dental Education Association
American Geriatrics Society
American Medical Association
American Medical School Neuroscience Department Chairs
American Nurses Association
American Orthopedic Association
American Orthopedic Association Council of Orthopedic Residency Directors
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association

American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science
American Society of Hematology
American Student Dental Association
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges
Association of Anatomy, Cell Biology and Neurobiology Chairs
Association of Bioethics Program Directors
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology
Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers
Association of Schools Advancing Health Professions
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Anesthesiologists
Association of University Professors of Neurology
California Consortium of Addiction Programs & Professionals
Council on Social Work Education
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Emergency Medicine Residents' Association
Health Professions Network
HIV Medicine Association
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Institute for Healthcare Improvement
International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium
National AHEC Organization
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Council for Diversity in the Health Professions
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Medical Association
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
North American Primary Care Research Group
Physician Assistant Education Association
Pre-Health Dreamers
Society of Academic Associations of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine

Society of Emergency Medicine Physician Assistants
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Surgical Chairs
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Student National Medical Association