

July 30, 2020

The Honorable David Perdue United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable Todd Young United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable John Cornyn United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable Richard Durbin United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable Christopher Coons United States Senate Washington, DC 20510  
The Honorable Patrick Leahy United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Perdue, Durbin, Young, Coons, Cornyn, and Leahy:

During this global pandemic, the role of Foreign Physical Therapy Graduates in augmenting the physical therapy workforce is especially critical to the care of the thousands of patients battling COVID-19. That is a compelling reason why I am pleased to take this opportunity to express its strong support for the bipartisan Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, S. 3599, introduced by Senators David Perdue, Richard Durbin, Todd Young, Christopher Coons, John Cornyn, and Patrick Leahy. This innovative legislation would authorize immigrant visas for health care clinicians, including up to 15,000 for physicians and 25,000 for nurses who are eligible to practice in the United States or are already in the country on temporary work visas, but this legislation is incomplete without addition of Physical therapists as they come under Schdule A occupation along with Nurses as per US Dept of Labor which means there is a shortage of these professionals in United States. The visas would provide a pathway to employment-based green cards and, in doing so, it would quickly address one of the health care system's most pressing needs and with that being said S3599 needs an amendment for addition of 5000 more unused visas for Physical Therapists who are eligible to practice in United States or already on temporary work visas.

Physical Therapists are rehab 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. Physical Therapists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma in various settings including hospitals, nursing home, homes and out-patient settings. They are serving in the community and seeing all these patients without knowing if they have been infected with covid19 which puts them at higher risk for infection based on the nature of their job with longer duration 1:1 with patient care.

Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act would address the shortage of physical therapists that existed before the pandemic but recognizing that the shortages are growing more severe as the need for caregivers becomes greater with each passing day especially with baby boomers population going up each passing day. It is an extremely timely response to the risk imposed by COVID-19.

By recapturing a limited number of unused visas from prior years and allocating them to doctors and nurses, also requires the inclusion for Physical Therapists.

I urge Congress to pass S. 3599 as part of any additional COVID-19 legislative stimulus package. By taking such action, Congress would go a long way toward assuring the nation's health care workforce needs are met. The legislation would accomplish this by addressing joint workforce needs that have grown all the more critical, not only as a consequence of the increased number of physical therapists required to treat COVID-19 patients, but also those necessary to stand in for the physical therapists who have unfortunately contracted COVID-19 themselves and are unable to continue to serve in the workforce.

In conclusion, the Healthcare Workforce Resilience Act, S. 3599, is a smart, bipartisan approach to the physician and nursing workforce shortage with inclusion of Physical Therapists – both long and short term - that draws on an untapped resource. It would help save countless lives in these unprecedented times.

I strongly support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Childs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John D. Childs, PT, PhD, MBA, FAPTA  
CEO, Evidence In Motion