Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Secretary Pompeo:

We write to strongly urge the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of State (State) to ensure that foreign physicians and healthcare workers are able to provide much-needed support to the domestic workforce in the fight against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including by providing critical care for patients suffering from COVID-19. Today, the United States has the most confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the world.\(^1\) For weeks, state, local, and federal officials have focused their efforts on addressing the extreme shortage of medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators, that has hindered our response to this national emergency. However, one critical shortage area that has thus far been overlooked is that of our healthcare workforce.

Long-before this pandemic emerged, the United States was already experiencing a shortage of medical workers.\(^2\) As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase, so does the risk to U.S. doctors, nurses, and other critical care workers.\(^3\) As this crisis will undoubtedly continue to take its toll on these professionals, we must do everything in our power to build and retain a robust workforce.

More than 25 percent of doctors and 17 percent of medical workers in the United States are foreign-born.\(^4\) Many of these workers stand ready to serve our country but are unable to do so

---


because of a lack of flexibility in their visa categories and other limitations in our immigration system. However, there are several steps that DHS and State could immediately implement to ease such restrictions and allow these workers to assist in the COVID-19 fight:

- **Expedited Adjudications**: USCIS should expedite the adjudication of petitions and applications filed by or on behalf of healthcare workers or, at a minimum, exempt such petitions and applications from the March 20, 2020 suspension of premium processing.\(^5\)

- **Employment Authorization Documents (EADs)**: USCIS should expedite the adjudication of EADs for healthcare workers, and automatically extend EADs for such workers, including those in J-2, E-2, L-2, and H-4 status.

- **Increased Mobility**: USCIS should suspend the requirements for amended petitions imposed by the July 21, 2015 guidance memo implementing Matter of Simeio Solutions, so that H-1B healthcare workers can quickly move to locations where their services are needed.\(^6\)

- **Medical Licenses**: Consistent with the policy announcement by the White House on March 13, 2020, to allow doctors who are licensed in one state to assist with the COVID-19 response in another state, USCIS should similarly approve H-1B petitions to permit doctors who are licensed in one state to work in another state.\(^7\)

- **Agency Teams**: Both USCIS and the State Department should assign employees to serve on teams to address immigration-related healthcare issues and expedite requests for petitions and applications filed by or on behalf of medical professionals.

- **Flexibility for J-1 Physicians**: State should issue a statement confirming that J-1 physicians are permitted to be redeployed to new rotations within the host training institution as needed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Visa Processing**: The State Department should provide emergency visa processing or other accommodations for physicians seeking to enter the United States to commence graduate medical education and training programs that begin on July 1.

Our healthcare system is being pushed to its limits in many areas of the country, while experts confirm that the peak of this crisis has not yet been reached.\(^8\) It is incumbent upon us to do everything we can to support U.S. physicians and healthcare workers who put their lives on the

---


line every day in the COVID-19 battle and make sure that every American receives proper
treatment. We urge you to act on these recommendations and respectfully request your position
on these proposals by Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

Sincerely,

Tony
tony

TONY CARDENAS
Member of Congress

Zoe

ZOE LOFOREN
Member of Congress
Letter to DHS and State on Foreign Physicians and Healthcare workers
April 6, 2020

Additional signatories:

Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress  
Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal  
Member of Congress  
Ed Case  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress  
Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress  
Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress  
Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress  
Val Demings  
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress  
Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress  
Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress

Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Eleanor Homes Norton
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Schakowsky</td>
<td>David Scott</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Sherman</td>
<td>Albio Sires</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Soto</td>
<td>Jackie Speier</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Stanton</td>
<td>Haley M. Stevens</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Titus</td>
<td>Rashida Tlaib</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma J. Torres</td>
<td>David Trone</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Underwood</td>
<td>Juan Vargas</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marc Veasey</td>
<td>Nydia M. Velázquez</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Woodall</td>
<td>John Yarmuth</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Moulton</td>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td>Member of Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>