



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

March 13, 2008

The Honorable Kent Conrad
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Conrad:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to express our strong support for S. 2672, the "Conrad State 30 Improvement Act," which would reauthorize the J-1 visa waiver program.

Many communities, including rural and low-income urban areas, have problems attracting physicians to meet their health care needs. To address these unmet needs, many of these communities have turned to foreign physicians who have just completed their graduate medical education in the United States. The use of J-1 visa waivers is a major means of placing physicians in medically underserved communities.

The reauthorization of the Conrad State 30 program will provide incentives for physicians to practice in medically underserved areas. We support key provisions in this bill that create a mechanism for expanding the current cap on J-1 visa waivers per year per state and that exempt physicians upon completion of their service requirement from green card caps.

There is a growing consensus that the United States faces a future shortage of physicians. In its last report in 2005, the Council on Graduate Medical Education (COGME) predicted a shortage of 85,000 physicians by the year 2020. Alleviating physician shortages is critical, especially in medically underserved areas that already face health care access challenges.

Reauthorizing this J-1 visa waiver program, creating a mechanism to increase the number of Conrad State 30 slots, and exempting from immigration caps physicians who have completed their service requirements will help ensure continued access to care in medically underserved communities across the United States.

We appreciate your leadership on this important issue and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin vertical red line.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA