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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 support for S. 1979, the "Conrad State 30 Improvement Act," which would permanently reauthorize and make improvements to 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 international medical graduates. The use of J-1 visa waivers is a significant means of placing physicians in communities that face health care access challenges.

The permanent reauthorization of the J-1 visa waiver program will provide incentives for physicians to practice in medically underserved areas. We also support provisions in this bill that would make improvements to the program, such as opening the program to physicians on H-1B visas, exempting physicians upon completion of their service requirement from H-1B visa caps and six-year limits, improvements to employment contract terms, and establishing a mechanism to expand the current cap on the number of visa waivers per state.

The "Conrad State 30 Improvement Act" will help aid 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, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD