

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