



AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | *Doctors for Adults*®

July 13, 2009

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

Dear Senator Conrad:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), representing 129,000 internal medicine physicians and medical students, I am writing to applaud your efforts to expand and permanently reauthorize the Conrad State 30 J-1 visa waiver program under the “Conrad State 30 Improvement Act” (S. 628). Approximately thirty percent of the College’s members are international medical graduates (IMGs). The College has long recognized the value of IMGs and their contributions to health care delivery in this country. Many IMGs provide care in underserved areas by participating in J-1 visa waiver programs, including Conrad 30.

A 2006 GAO study revealed that the use of J-1 visa waivers remains a major means of placing physicians in underserved areas of the United States. In fact, the number of physicians practicing in underserved areas through the use of J-1 visa waivers was roughly one and half times the number of physicians practicing through National Health Service Corps programs. Over half of these J-1 visa waiver physicians practiced internal medicine.

The College supports your proposed reforms for the Conrad 30 program including eliminating the need for repeated reauthorization of the program. The College is also supportive of the provision in your legislation that will increase the number of Conrad 30 J-1 waivers to address the increased demand for such waivers by states, while maintaining a well-balanced national distribution. In addition, your proposed green card cap exemption would provide an important incentive for international medical graduates to practice in underserved communities.

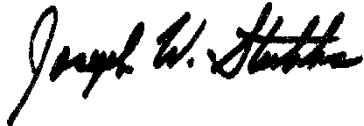
Based on feedback from our members who are current or former Conrad State 30 participants, we urge you to consider the following additional changes to the Conrad State 30 Program:

- A universal and simplified state and federal J-1 visa application process
- Distribution of J-1 visa physicians in the most medically underserved areas based on the total population of the state instead of the current set number of 30 physicians per state regardless of need and population

- Permission for Conrad State 30 participants to change sponsors among medically underserved areas without restriction within the Conrad 30 system; and an expansion of the current grace period to 120 days in order to find another Conrad 30 position if participants are relieved of their duties.

The College thanks you for your leadership on this important matter and looks forward to working with you to permanently reauthorize and improve the Conrad State 30 program with these positive reforms to direct more physicians into health professions shortage areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph W. Stubbs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a prominent "W".

Joseph W. Stubbs, MD, FACP
President of the American College of Physicians