

September 14, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the undersigned health professions organizations, we urge you to ensure that all members of the health care workforce with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status are able to continue their employment, education, training, and research, with passage of a permanent legislative remedy, such as the bipartisan, bicameral Dream Act of 2017 (S. 1615, H.R. 3440). By providing a legal pathway to permanent residency for undocumented Americans brought to the U.S. as children, Congress can help our country produce a diverse and culturally responsive health care workforce to meet the needs of underserved populations, improve cultural awareness, and promote health equity.

With the nation's population growing and becoming increasingly diverse, it is crucial that the health professions workforce respond to the changing demographics of the country to mitigate racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic health disparities. Research demonstrates that diversity in the health professions leads to improvements in access to care for underserved communities, and some studies have shown that patients report greater satisfaction with clinical care when they are treated by providers from the same racial/ethnic background.

Diverse health professions school classes also enhance the ability of the entire workforce to provide culturally competent care to individuals regardless of their background. Higher education research shows that diversity in the classroom produces a more enriched learning environment. Diversity contributes to increased exposure to divergent perspectives, enhances cognitive complexity, promotes civic engagement and facilitates more inclusive teaching and educational content. Diversity in teams has contributed to greater productivity, creativity and innovation that has significant implications for advancing science and health care.

Health professions students who are undocumented encompass a diverse, multiethnic population, who are often bilingual and more likely to practice in underserved communities. For a narrow cohort of undocumented students that meet specific criteria, legislation like the Dream Act of 2017 would grant lawful presence in the U.S., work authorization, and in many cases state identification and driver's licenses, all of which make attending health professions school and residency training possible.

Our organizations are dedicated to promoting a culturally competent, diverse, and prepared health and biomedical workforce that leads to improved care and health equity. A permanent legislative remedy would help us achieve this goal. We urge congressional leadership to advance legislation before health professionals participating in DACA lose their lawful status and are unable to continue their employment, education, training, and research.

Sincerely,

Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health  
Academy on Violence and Abuse  
The Addiction Medicine Foundation  
Alliance for Academic Internal Medicine  
American Academy of Dermatology Association  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Anatomists  
American Association of Chairs of Departments of Psychiatry  
American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine  
American Association of Directors of Psychiatric Residency Training  
American Board of Medical Specialties  
American College of Physicians  
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American Dental Education Association  
American Geriatrics Society  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Physiological Society  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society of Transplantation  
Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association

Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association  
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research  
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges  
Association of Anatomy Cell Biology and Neurobiology Chairs  
Association of Bioethics Program Directors (ABPD)  
Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology  
Association of Departments of Family Medicine  
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors  
Association of Graduate Departments of Biochemistry  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers  
Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions  
Association of University Anesthesiologists  
Association of University Professors of Neurology  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Council of Emergency Medicine Residency Directors  
Council on Social Work Education  
Emergency Medicine Residents' Association  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality  
Heart Failure Society of America  
HIV Medicine Association  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Institute for Healthcare Improvement  
Latino Medical Student Association  
Medical Group Management Association  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National League for Nursing  
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
Physician Assistant Education Association  
Pre-Health Dreamers  
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine

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