



IMG TASKFORCE

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATE TASKFORCE

March 2, 2012

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

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Conrad and Moran,

On behalf of the International Medical Graduate (IMG) Taskforce, I wish to express our organization's enthusiastic support for S. 1979, the "Conrad State 30 Improvement Act", which would permanently authorize and improve the important, service-based Conrad 30 J Waiver Program. The Conrad State 30 Program has provided increased medical care to tens of millions of otherwise medically underserved Americans in rural areas and low-income populations by attracting U.S.-trained International Medical Graduate (IMG) physicians who agree to a three-year service period.

The IMG Taskforce is a nationwide coalition of professionals in medicine and law dedicated to helping Americans, especially those in rural and other physician-shortage areas, obtain the basic medical services they so desperately need and deserve. Our members work on behalf of universities, teaching hospitals, medical centers, and clinics of all sizes, and on behalf of IMG physicians seeking necessary authorizations, including J waiver applications. As such, members of our organization have occupied a front row seat from which to observe the stellar success of the Conrad State 30 Program since its inception as a pilot program (the Conrad State 20 Program) in 1994. We have witnessed the increased medical care to diverse, underserved populations – from low-income urban communities receiving care at hospitals in our nation's toughest neighborhoods to farming communities served by rural health clinics. We have been gratified by those instances, time and again, in which IMG physicians and their families become part of the local communities and continue to treat the medically underserved, even after fulfilling the 3-year service period required by the program.

The IMG Taskforce enthusiastically supports the Conrad State 30 Improvement Act as an important measure to complement efforts to increase the number of American medical graduates. Under the Act, the program would continue to provide a budget-neutral, effective approach to mitigating chronic physician shortages in the U.S. Our organization also supports the improvements to the program contained within the bill. These include additional paths to physician participation, increased physician retention mechanisms, the ability for smoother operation due to technical fixes, and strengthened self-enforcement mechanisms to better protect the integrity of the system.

Sincerely,

Gregory Siskind, Chair
IMG Taskforce