

January 13, 2022

**TO:** Chairman Browne, Chairman Hughes, and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee

**FROM:** Heather Tyler, Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

**SUBJECT:** House Bill 245, Update to International Medical Graduate Requirements, including Amendment A02237

The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) urges your consideration and swift passage of House Bill 245, sponsored by Representative Aaron Kaufer (R-Luzerne). As you may know, the bill has already passed the House and Senate Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure. It is currently on second consideration in the Senate and awaits action by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

It is no secret that Pennsylvania health care is confronting the dire intersection of a critical staffing shortage and a record-breaking surge of COVID-19. While much of the current anxiety has rightfully been focused on hospital nurses, the workforce crisis extends to all health care professionals along the entire continuum of care. In fact, just prior to the pandemic, it was estimated that by 2030 Pennsylvania will lack more than 1,000 primary care physicians—a number surely compounded by providers working nearly two years in a public health crisis.

This legislation directly addresses the overall workforce shortage by easing some of the licensing barriers that prevent capable physicians from providing care. In short, HB 245 will more quickly increase the number of well-qualified physicians available to treat patients in Pennsylvania.

- By reducing required residency from three years to two, this legislation ensures that graduates of international medical schools are held to the same educational standards as graduates of U.S. and Canadian medical schools for the purposes of licensure in Pennsylvania.
- By removing an arbitrary two-facility practice restriction on physician institutional licenses, this legislation will allow those who work for teaching organizations to treat patients at more facilities within the same health system—enabling faster and more flexible assembly and deployment of care teams to meet patient needs. This provision also codifies an effective waiver that was implemented earlier in the pandemic. There have been no known negative outcomes as a result of this change.

HAP has [recently asked](#) the General Assembly to support hospitals through several measures, including removing licensing barriers to ensure there are enough skilled clinical staff available to treat patients in Pennsylvania. House Bill 245 is an immediate, concrete step in the right direction.

On behalf of Pennsylvania hospitals and their hardworking and exhausted health care professionals, we respectfully ask that you please include House Bill 245 on the committee calendar and vote yes.