



June 15, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lawler
U.S. House of Representatives
324 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
2407 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Elvira Salazar
U.S. House of Representatives
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Yvette Clarke
U.S. House of Representatives
2058 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representatives Lawler, Bishop, Salazar, and Clarke:

On behalf of the more than 95,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), thank you for introducing H.R. 7961, the H-1Bs for the Physicians and Healthcare Workforce Act. This bipartisan legislation would exempt physicians and other health professionals from the new \$100,000 H-1B fee, thereby ensuring patients continue to have access to the surgeons, physicians, and health care workers that millions of Americans depend on.

On September 19, 2025, the Trump Administration issued a Presidential Proclamation requiring employers to pay a \$100,000 fee for each new H-1B visa application, which is a dramatic increase over the previous fees averaging \$3,500 per application. While the Proclamation provides the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with the authority to exempt certain individuals, or entire professions, when it is in the national interest, no physicians or other healthcare workers have been granted exemptions to date.

The health care workforce was already under growing strain prior to the imposition of this new fee. An aging population is driving rising demand for healthcare services, and many of the physicians currently serving rural and underserved communities are themselves nearing retirement, threatening to leave gaps in areas that are already critically short-staffed. Decades of insufficient investment in physician payment and graduate medical education continue to constrain the pipeline of new physicians needed to replace them.

The added cost of this fee is causing healthcare employers, including safety-net hospitals and other practices, to pause or abandon recruitment of physicians and other providers, efforts that in many cases have been in progress for over a year. International medical graduates are essential to a high-functioning U.S. healthcare system. They make up one in four practicing physicians in the country, disproportionately serving in rural and underserved communities and filling critical gaps in the workforce. International medical

facs.org

CHICAGO HEADQUARTERS
633 N. Saint Clair Street
Chicago, IL 60611-3295
T 312-202-5000
F 312-202-5001
E-mail: postmaster@facs.org

WASHINGTON OFFICE
20 F Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20001
T 202-337-2701
F 202-337-4271
E-mail: ahp@facs.org

graduates make up 20% of all active general surgeons in the U.S.¹ and up to 74% of the predicted shortage of 86,000 physicians by 2036 will be from the surgical workforce.² The imposition of this \$100,000 fee will only exacerbate growing shortages and threaten access to surgical care, especially in areas of the country that are already suffering from lack of access.

Although H-1B sponsored surgeons represent a small fraction of the national surgical workforce, they are overrepresented in underserved communities. Counties with the highest levels of poverty have more than four times as many H-1B sponsored surgeons than the counties with the lowest poverty levels, and the percentage of these surgeons is more than twice as high in rural counties than urban counties.³ This increase in the H-1B application fee poses a real threat to access to surgical care for the most vulnerable areas of the country where practices are already operating on razor-thin margins. These employers simply cannot absorb a six-figure fee on top of existing onboarding costs. Each month of delay translates directly into longer patient wait times, deferred care, and risks straining already overburdened emergency departments.

The H-1Bs for the Physicians and Healthcare Workforce Act is a commonsense solution that ensures physicians and other essential health care providers are not unnecessarily swept into a fee structure designed to address other workforce sectors. Thank you for your leadership on this bipartisan legislation and we look forward to working with Congress to strengthen the surgical workforce and ensure patients receive access to the high-quality care they deserve.

Sincerely,



Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS
Executive Director & CEO

¹ [International Medical Graduates in the US Physician Workforce and Graduate Medical Education: Current and Historical Trends in: Journal of Graduate Medical Education Volume 10: Issue 2 | Journal of Graduate Medical Education](#)

² [Surgeon Shortage Calls for Action | ACS](#)

³ [Surgeons Sponsored for H-1B Visas in the US | Surgery | JAMA Surgery | JAMA Network](#)