



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

September 14, 2022

The Honorable Alex Padilla
Chair
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Immigration, Citizenship and Border Safety
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John Cornyn
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Immigration, Citizenship and Border Safety
U.S. Senate

Dear Chairman Padilla and Ranking Member Cornyn:

We welcome today's hearing "Flatlining Care: Why Immigrants Are Crucial to Bolstering Our Health Care Workforce" as a hopeful sign that Congress recognizes the importance of the immigrant community to the health care workforce and will work vigorously to provide pathways to citizenship and expanded employment opportunities for these crucial employees.

The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, service providers and organizations, is uniquely situated to advocate on behalf of the immigrant health care workforce. As an organization grounded in the mission and values of the Catholic Church, we believe that regardless of legal status, immigrants possess inherent human dignity and inalienable worth which should be respected and supports public policies that are essential to promoting and protecting that inherent dignity and worth. And as health providers, we also know the importance of the immigrant workforce to our health care organizations and to the ability of both Catholic and all other health care providers to continue to meet the health care needs of all Americans.

As the CEOs of the nation's Catholic health systems have stated, immigrants in our facilities working "as nurses, physicians, aides, dietary workers and facility professionals...are a part of what makes American health care great." Additionally, immigrants are a vital part of the workforce providing services to the elderly and others in need of long-term care, helping older and vulnerable Americans receive the services they need in our facilities as well as in their homes and communities. Our member organizations celebrate the contributions these employees have made to our health ministry and provide a wide array of programs to assist them in their work and in their integration into American society and culture.

CHA supports two vital pieces of legislation in the current Congress to help the immigrants working in Catholic health care and their families lead better and more secure lives, as well as to ensure that our immigration system is changed to help facilitate the entry of future health care workers. The American DREAM and Promise Act (H.R. 6) would provide additional protections and a pathway to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants in the Deferred Action for

Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) as well as Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, some of whom work in our health care facilities. CHA also supports the U.S. Citizenship Act (S. 348), to assist DACA and TPS recipients as well as provide an earned pathway to citizenship for approximately 11 million undocumented persons. According to the Migration Policy Institute, immigrants ranging from naturalized citizens, legal permanent residents and temporary workers to TPS recipients and those in the DACA program accounted for nearly 18 percent of the 14.7 million people in our nation working in a health-care occupation. As members of the Senate are undoubtedly aware, the lingering effects of the global pandemic have left many health care organizations with severe staffing shortfalls, which are not expected to ease anytime soon. Congressional action to provide employment security and a firmer basis in our society for these immigrants is one vital way of helping to address our nation's health care workforce challenges.

Thank you for highlighting the importance of immigrants working to provide health care for our nation. We look forward to joining with you and all members of Congress to ensure that their participation in the health care system and contributions to the health and well-being of all Americans are not only appreciated but also encouraged through legislative action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO