



September 8, 2021

*Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO*

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

*Nemours Children's
Hospital, Delaware
Mark Mumford,
Chief Executive,
Nemours Delaware
Valley Operations*

On behalf of the hospitals and health care delivery systems of the Delaware Healthcare Association, we urge the U.S. Department of State to address the backlog of immigrant visas for eligible foreign-trained nurses by placing registered nurses in the first tier for processing.

*Bayhealth
Terry Murphy,
President & CEO*

Like the rest of the nation, Delaware faces a health care workforce shortage, particularly for nurses. According to the American Nurses Association, by 2022, there will be more than 100,000 registered nurse jobs available -- far more than any other profession. At the same time, more than 500,000 registered nurses are expected to retire. The shortage continues to grow with an aging population and a greater demand for health care services.

*Beebe Healthcare
David A. Tam,
MD, MBA,
President & CEO*

The COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated this shortage. Many nurses on the front lines that have been battling the COVID-19 Pandemic over the last year and a half are retiring or leaving the profession due to burnout. Meanwhile our health systems need more nurses to meet the swell of COVID patients amidst the Delta variant and the increased demand for other services.

*ChristianaCare
Janice E. Nevin,
MD, MPH
President & CEO*

Many Delaware hospitals employ or are seeking to employ foreign-trained nurses to ensure an adequate supply of health care workers. Foreign-trained nurses are critical to filling workforce gaps as they are required to meet equivalent education standards, demonstrate English fluency, maintain a clean disciplinary record, and obtain state licensure.

*TidalHealth Nanticoke
Penny Short, MSM, BSN,
RN
President & CEO*

Unfortunately, much needed immigrant visas have been delayed due to processing delays and lack of prioritization. This creates a hardship for hospitals and health systems looking to fill nursing vacancies at a time when demand is at an all-time high.

*Wilmington Veterans
Affairs Medical Center
Vincent Kane
Director*

*Delaware Healthcare
Association
Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO*

We urge you to prioritize the processing of immigrant visas for eligible foreign-trained nurses, who are waiting for visas to enter the U.S. and to care for patients. Particularly with our nation struggling through a global pandemic, the urgency of this request cannot be overstated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Wayne A. Smith'.

Wayne A. Smith
President & CEO