



Charles N. Kahn III  
President and CEO

July 1, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Blinken:

The Federation of American Hospitals (FAH) is the national representative of more than 1,000 leading tax-paying hospitals and health systems throughout the United States. FAH members provide patients and communities with access to high-quality, affordable care in both urban and rural areas across 46 states, plus Washington, D.C and Puerto Rico. Our members include teaching, acute, inpatient rehabilitation, behavioral health, and long-term care hospitals and provide a wide range of inpatient, ambulatory, post-acute, emergency, children's, and cancer services.

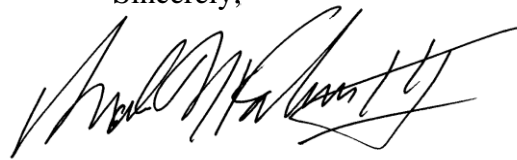
We write concerning the Immigrant Visa Prioritization update issued by the State Department on April 30, 2021. Unfortunately, the guidance issued by the State Department placed nurses and other highly trained health care professionals in Tier Four for the visa authorization process for entry into the United States, the lowest priority tier. The categorization of nurses with "all other immigrant visas, including employment preference and diversity visas," is causing significant delays of entry to the United States for a population of desperately needed foreign-trained immigrant nurses and health care workers. We urge the State Department to ensure that registered nurses seeking immigrant visas are in the First Tier of the Department's current priority list for processing.

FAH member hospitals are facing a significant workforce shortage due to the combination of stress that the COVID-19 pandemic placed on the nation's health care system and frontline caregivers over the past year; the lack of trained and qualified workers in the United States to fill currently open positions; a rise in patients seeking the preventative care they deferred during the pandemic; and many other factors. These staffing issues have a direct effect on the ability of our hospitals to meet the needs of the patients and communities in which we serve.

Amending the Immigrant Visa Prioritization guidance and directing U.S. Embassies and Consulates to prioritize issuing immigrant visas to desperately needed foreign-trained nurses would expedite the timeline under which qualified nurses could enter the United States and begin treating patients at our many sites of care.

The FAH and our member hospitals strongly urge the State Department to re-evaluate the Immigrant Visa Prioritization guidance to prioritize highly trained nurses and medical professionals. Prioritizing visas for workers in the health care industry would help alleviate the significant workforce shortages our industry is currently facing and would help our hospitals continue to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency and better serve the communities in which we operate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Michael R. Smith", written in a cursive style.