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WASHINGTON'S 9TH DISTRICT

Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act **Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09)**

Background: The nursing and allied health workforces face critical shortages. It is estimated that an additional 200,000 nurses per year will need to be hired to meet increased demand and replace retiring nurses. Many immigrants are interested in joining the health care workforce, however, the barriers to entering the field can be prohibitive. The costs of licensing, certification, training, and education make it extremely difficult for some immigrants to enter the field while also balancing paying bills and supporting their families. This is true for individuals with and without international training.

We should do more to support immigrants in the pursuit of education and licensure in health care fields. Taking steps to incentivize and support immigrants entering the health care field can help reverse the trend of brain waste in our country, increase the health care workforce, and expand quality, accessible, and culturally competent care for our communities.

The Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act will help immigrants, regardless of whether they have any previous health care experience, enter the health care workforce by:

- Creating grants for programs that provide training, licensing, certification, and case management for immigrants interested in entering the health care field; and
- Opening eligibility for the National Health Service Corp (NHSC) to non-U.S. citizen immigrants.

The bill attempts to combat the under/unemployment in immigrant communities by providing direct assistance to individuals who wish to join the health care workforce in nursing or an allied health profession (e.g. dental hygienists, dietitians, medical technologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, speech language pathologists).

The bill would also open eligibility to the NHSC to immigrants. The NHSC is a critical program that places health care workers in high-need areas while providing them with scholarships and loan repayment. The health care field is a prohibitively expensive one to enter and NHSC has helped health care workers afford to serve communities in dire need of health care professionals.

Endorsing Organizations: Asian Counseling and Referral Center (ACRS), International Community Health Services (ICHS), El Centro de la Raza, National Partnership for New Americans, One America, Renton Technical College, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Seattle Indian Health Board, Church World Service, Coalition of Community Organizations (COCO), Congolese Integration Network, Global Talent-Docs, Idaho, International Rescue Committee and Refugee Advocacy Lab, Medicos Unidos Venezuela – USA, National Immigration Forum, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Justice Team, The Advocates for Human Rights, The Center for Disability Rights, The IMPRINT Coalition, The Welcoming Center - Pennsylvania, Upwardly Global, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, World Education Service, Yakima Valley Community College.