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July 17, 2017

The Honorable John F. Kelly
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Kelly,

I am writing to bring to your attention the inadvertent impact on our students caused by the suspension of premium processing for H-1B visas. When granted to foreign-born graduates of U.S. medical schools, the H-1B visa provides important benefits to U.S. hospitals and patients including those of Loma Linda University. The decision to suspend premium processing of H-1B visas to reduce the Citizenship and Immigration Services' backlog and potential changes to the qualifications needed to apply for premium processing in the future, may inadvertently deny foreign-born students (at our institution or elsewhere) opportunities to continue their education and practice medicine in this country.

The premium processing of applications is essential for non-U.S. citizens who are graduates of U.S. medical schools and seek to begin their medical residency programs in the United States. The selection process which has identified, or "matched" medical residents and teaching hospitals since the 1950s, begins in September for the residency class commencing on July 1 of the following year. Because the matches are not announced until late March, premium processing is an essential tool to ensure that medical residents may begin their training on July 1. Uncertainty regarding the student's ability to obtain an H-1B visa in a timely fashion could lead to otherwise desirable students being ranked lower on school preference lists solely due to their immigration status. This outcome would not only negatively impact the students, but also the ability of schools like mine, a faith-based institution with responsibility for Seventh-day Adventist students from Canada and the English-speaking Caribbean, to attract foreign students and for teaching hospitals to fill their residency program slots with the most desirable candidates. Further, these candidates often practice in rural or underserved areas during their residencies and thereafter through the Conrad 30 and other similar programs.

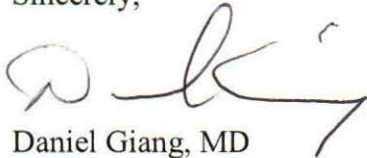
We understand that the premium processing program may shortly resume for applicants with degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and for participants in the Conrad 30 program. We applaud this focus on higher education but urge that reinstated premium processing include graduates of U.S. medical schools regardless of their participation in the Conrad 30 program. While many of our students do participate in this program, others do not though they still serve in, or near, rural or underserved areas. I would also note that clinical medicine is not considered a STEM field and, as a result, medical school graduates, including

those from Loma Linda University, would not be eligible to request premium processing if a STEM degree is a prerequisite. I therefore request that the Citizenship and Immigration Services revise the scope of the qualifications necessary to seek premium processing to include graduates of U.S. medical schools intending to practice clinical medicine.

I would be remiss if I did not also underscore the important benefit to our country derived from facilitating the entry of non-U.S. citizen graduates of our medical schools into medical residency programs when reviewing the current H-1B visa program. As noted above, these physicians fill an important, un-met need in our country. Unlike other professions where there may be concerns regarding displacement of U.S. citizens, we currently face a shortage of doctors and other healthcare professionals. As such, H-1B visa-holders help fill a need rather than creating displacement. Further, these medical resident program participants earn the same salary and are held to the same standards as their U.S. citizen counterparts.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the H-1B program and its relevance to Loma Linda University.

Sincerely,



Daniel Giang, MD
Vice President
Graduate Medical Education

cc: Sen. Dianne Feinstein
Sen. Kamala Harris
Rep. Pete Aguilar
Rep. Ken Calvert
Rep. Paul Cook
Rep. Raul Ruiz
Rep. Mark Takano
Rep. Norma Torres



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

SEP 29 2017

Daniel Giang, MD
Vice President
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Dear Dr. Giang:

Thank you for your July 17, 2017 letter. Acting Secretary Duke asked that I respond on her behalf.

On March 3, 2017, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) publically announced that premium processing for all H-1B petitions, including cap petitions, would be temporarily suspended beginning April 3, 2017. The announcement indicated that the premium processing suspension may last up to 6 months. USCIS began instituting a rollout plan to resume premium processing in phases.

The first phase of the premium processing resumption plan began on June 26, 2017. USCIS resumed premium processing services for all H-1B petitions filed for medical doctors under the Conrad 30 Waiver Program, as well as interested government agency waivers.

The second phase of the premium processing resumption plan began on July 24, 2017. USCIS resumed premium processing services for all cap-exempt petitions, where the H-1B petitioner is an institution of higher education; a nonprofit related to or affiliated with an institution of higher education, or a nonprofit research or governmental research organization. During the second phase, premium processing services also resumed for petitions where the beneficiary will be employed at a qualifying cap-exempt institution.

The third phase of the premium processing resumption plan began on September 18, 2017. USCIS resumed premium processing services for all H-1B visa petitions subject to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 cap. USCIS plans to resume premium processing for the remaining extension of stay petitions on or before October 3, 2017.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James W. McCament". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

James W. McCament
Acting Director