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July 27, 2021

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

The American Health Care Association (AHCA) is a non-profit federation of affiliated health organizations throughout the United States, representing more than 14,500 non-profit and for-profit assisted living communities, nursing homes, and skilled nursing facilities. AHCA members provide patients and their communities with quality long term or post-acute care across the country. AHCA strives to deliver solutions to the problems faced by these facilities, aiming to improve the lives of the millions of people with disabilities, the elderly, and the frail.

I am contacting you regarding the Immigrant Visa Prioritization update issued by the State Department on April 30, 2021. This guidance placed nurses and other skilled healthcare professionals in the lowest priority tier for the visa authorization process for entry into the United States. This categorization is causing significant delays of entry into the United States for a desperately needed population of foreign-trained immigrant health care workers and nurses. Currently, one-sixth of our health care work force is foreign born.

Owners and operators of skilled nursing facilities and assisted living communities are currently faced with a significant work force shortage due to the strain on the country's health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of qualified and trained workers in the United States. This work force shortage is directly affecting the ability of our members to provide their patients and communities with the utmost care they are entitled to receive.

By amending the Immigrant Visa Prioritization update and prioritizing the entry of foreign-trained nurses and health care workers into the United States, we could significantly accelerate the timeline under which these health care professionals could enter the United States. This would

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allow us to continue to provide quality care for our patients and residents.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clifton J. Porter, II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Clifton J. Porter, II
Senior Vice President, Government Relations