Adopted as amended

RESOLUTION 17-410

(Referred to Reference Committee D)

Subject: Protection for Pennsylvania DACA Students, Physicians, and Patients

Introduced by: Gillian Naro, Penn State College of Medicine, on behalf of the Medical Students Section

Authors: Daniel Kim, Gillian Naro, and John Muller, Penn State College of Medicine

WHEREAS, 113 students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status applied to US medical schools, with 65 matriculating in the 2016-2017 academic year alone; and

WHEREAS, to be eligible for DACA protections to stay and work in the US, these youths must prove that they arrived in the United States prior to turning 16; were under the age of 31 in June 2012; have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007; are currently in school, graduated from high school, or obtained a general education development certificate (GED); and have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors; and

WHEREAS, an undocumented student network called Pre-Health Dreamers reports that it currently has over 215 prehealth undocumented students in 27 states in its network; and

WHEREAS, one social mission of medical education is to increase the number of primary care physicians in health professional shortage areas, especially those populated by underrepresented minorities. DACA students demonstrate characteristics likely to contribute directly to this social mission. DACA students are largely underrepresented minorities themselves, and such physicians are likely to return to and serve their communities, which are often low-income, health professional shortage areas; and

WHEREAS, DACA medical students are legally excluded from receiving federal financial aid, and many have already taken on this debt with the intention of living and working in the US; and

WHEREAS, DACA status medical students enrolled in school will now face uncertainty about completing their degrees, paying their student loans, and serving patients. Furthermore, if DACA residents are unable to complete their training, this will result in wasted graduate medical education funds, unfilled training slots, and generally exacerbate the physician shortage our country is facing, especially for our most vulnerable patients; and

WHEREAS, our nation’s health care workforce depends on the care provided by international medical graduates (IMGs)—one out of every four physicians practicing in the United States is an IMG. These individuals include many with DACA status who are filling gaps in care; and

WHEREAS, the Health Resources and Services Administration reported that there is a current shortage of over 8,200 primary care physicians. Likewise, an independent study by the Association of American Medical Colleges has projected that the total physician deficit will grow to between 61,700 and 94,700 physicians by 2025. Estimates have shown that the DACA initiative could help introduce 5,400 previously ineligible physicians into the U.S. health care system in the coming decades to help address these shortages and ensure patient access to care; and

WHEREAS, in Pennsylvania, DACA has allowed nearly 5,900 young people to come forward, pass background checks, and live and work legally; and
WHEREAS, ending DACA would cost Pennsylvania nearly $357.1 million in annual GDP losses;¹¹ and

WHEREAS, AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) President and CEO Darrell G. Kirch, MD, issued the following statement to "strongly urge [Trump] to not revoke the current DACA executive action until a permanent pathway to a lawful immigration status for DACA participants is approved by Congress.;¹² and

WHEREAS, the AAMC is dedicated to promoting a culturally competent, diverse, and prepared health and biomedical workforce that leads to improved health.;¹² and

WHEREAS, the AAMC also supports work underway on Capitol Hill to craft a potential legislative solution that would ensure a temporary stay of deportation for students with DACA status until such time that Congress approves a permanent fix, such as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Further, the AAMC encourages lawmakers to grant DREAMers eligibility for federal student loans since financing medical education is often cited as the biggest barrier for aspiring physicians.;¹² and

WHEREAS, medical students and residents with DACA status and DREAMers represent a small but important segment of the U.S. population, and their participation in our health care workforce will benefit all U.S. patients.;¹² and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association (AMA), has publicly urged Congress to take prompt action to protect and provide stability for individuals with DACA status.;¹³ therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED) support legislative efforts to protect Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status medical students, physicians, and patients; and,

RESOLVED, that PAMED issue a statement in support of current U.S. healthcare professionals, including those currently training as medical students or residents and fellows, who are DACA recipients in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Fiscal Note:

Relevance to Strategic Plan

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References:


3. Balderas-Medina Anaya, Yohualli MD, MPH; del Rosario, Mithi; Doyle, Lawrence “Hy EdD”; Hayes-Bautista, David E. PhD. Undocumented Students Pursuing Medical Education: The
doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000000407


RELEVANT AMA AND AMA-MSS POLICY: