

Emergency Nurse Supply Relief Act HR 2536

- Foreign-educated registered nurses represent 15% of the newly licensed RNs in the country each year. Current visa caps have reduced this supply to a trickle for the past two years. Hospitals are facing increasingly severe nurse shortages, resulting in problems in staffing emergency rooms and units, thereby undermining patient care.
- This Act provides a three-year exemption from current Employment-Based visa caps, replaced with a separate annual cap of 20,000 RNs and physical therapists.
- The Act is also designed to enhance the training and retention of U.S.-educated nurses.
- The employer of each RN admitted under the new cap will pay a fee of \$1500, which will be deposited into a fund under the auspices of the Secretary of HHS.
- The fund created by these fees, combined with any additional appropriated funds, will be used for grants to U.S. nursing schools to help them expand their capacities. These schools have turned away over 100,000 applicants in each of the past several years.
- The Act will also incorporate a pilot program for retention grants, subject to appropriations, that will fund career enhancement training for healthcare workers jointly administered by healthcare facilities and nursing organizations.
- The Act also responds to concerns about the impact of migration on healthcare systems in poor countries.
 - The Immigration and Nationality Act is amended to facilitate the ability of RNs, who have received green cards to live permanently in the U.S., to spend extended periods in poor countries providing emergency medical care without losing their green cards.
 - The Immigration and Nationality Act is further amended to require that before a healthcare worker can immigrate, s/he must provide an attestation that s/he has no outstanding obligation to provide service at home arising from an educational grant s/he has received. This requirement is tailored and subject to waiver to avoid any improper coercion or abuse by the home government.