HCAOA Urges Congress to Support Immigration Reform to Address the Caregiver Needs of Seniors

Position
The Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) supports efforts for comprehensive immigration reform to address the current and future workforce needs of the aging population. In particular, HCAOA is in favor of a non-immigrant visa program that would allow qualified workers to enter the United States for employment in the home care industry.

In addition, HCAOA supports the Dream and Promise Act. This measure would protect the so-called “Dreamers,” individuals protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), from deportation and provide them a legal pathway to citizenship. The measure also offers legal status to those given Temporary Legal Status who come from areas engulfed in wars, civil conflicts, and natural disasters. As immigration legislation is developed, HCAOA urges Congress to consider the current and future home care workforce needs and support these efforts that would allow qualified workers to enter the United States to fill home care worker vacancies.

Background
As the population in the United States continues to age, it is clear that the existing workforce will not be able to meet their personal care needs. During times of lower unemployment rates, it can be especially difficult for home care providers to find qualified employees to care for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

Home care is the fastest growing industry in the United States, and provider shortages are already evident within the profession. The industry is expected to see a 34% increase in the demand for workers over the next decade. This projection is due to the fact that the U.S. Census Bureau expects the American senior population to increase from 42 million to 84 million by 2050.
Immigrants currently provide 27.5% of home care in the United States, despite the fact that they make up a much smaller percentage of the total population. In addition, HCAOA recognizes that immigrants working in home care tend to work nontraditional shifts that are often difficult to fill while also providing linguistic and cultural diversity to address the increased diversity in the United States population. Immigrants play a vital role in providing home care for seniors and those with disabilities and can continue to fill the increasing demand for workers in the industry.

In 2013, the concept of the New Worker Program (W Visa) emerged. This established a new nonimmigrant W classification for foreign workers performing services or labor for registered employers. The program cap could have reached up to 200,000 visas for these qualified workers. The HCAOA supports Congress considering a similar program in order to bring more home care workers into the United States to meet growing demands within the industry.

If you would like more information on this matter or have questions, please contact Patrick Cooney at patrick@federalgrp.com or by calling (202) 413-2629 (m).

The Home Care Association of America (HCAOA) is the nation’s first association for providers of private-pay home care. HCAOA was founded on the principle that quality duty home care has one model of care and that model is to employ, train, monitor and supervise caregivers, create a plan of care for the client and work toward a safe and secure environment for the person at home.