



December 3, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin L. King Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

The North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) writes to urge that an exception be provided to H-1B physicians from the Proclamation, “Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers,” as issued by President Trump on Sept. 19, 2025.

NASPGHAN represents more than 3,000 pediatric gastroenterologists, pediatric gastroenterology nurses and advanced practice providers, and pediatric registered dietitians in the United States, Canada, and Mexico and is the only organization singularly dedicated to advocating for children with gastrointestinal, liver and nutrition-related diseases and disorders.

The demand for pediatric subspecialists is increasing due to a growing child population with a rising prevalence of chronic diseases, including conditions that require the care of a pediatric gastroenterologist.¹ Today, children with digestive diseases and disorders may encounter significant wait times to see a pediatric gastroenterologist, or may have to drive long distances to receive care. In 2025, the mean average driving distance to visit a pediatric gastroenterologist was 20.7 miles, and for many patients requiring a pediatric gastroenterologist, the distance is much further.²

NASPGHAN, children’s hospitals across the country, and our pediatric populations rely on H-1B physicians, including medical residents, fellows, clinical practitioners, researchers, and those working in non-clinical settings, to meet demand. International medical graduates (IMGs) with

¹ 40 percent of children under the age of 18 years have at least one chronic, or life-long, health condition. Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2022-2023 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) data query. Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). Retrieved 11/19/25 from www.childhealthdata.org

² For roughly 15 percent of the population, the distance is more than 40 miles. The American Board of Pediatrics. Retrieved 11/19/25 from <https://www.abp.org/dashboards/driving-distance-to-visit-pediatric-subspecialists>

MD and other international degrees represent more than 30 percent of the pediatric gastroenterology workforce^{3,4} and, still, demand is not being met. Currently, there are roughly 200 open positions across the country for pediatric gastroenterologists. To meet the health care needs of children, reforms are needed that support and encourage IMGs to remain and practice in the United States after training. In contrast, applying the \$100,000 visa fee, as implemented by the Proclamation, to H-1B physicians will further strain the pediatric gastroenterology workforce.

We are heartened the Proclamation at section 1(c) grants you, as Secretary of Homeland Security, the authority to use discretion in applying the \$100,000 to a prospective employer if “...that hiring is in the national interest and does not pose a threat to the security or welfare of the United States.” Indeed, the ability of our children’s hospitals, health systems and academic institutions to hire H-1B physicians serves to advance the health and welfare of our nation’s children. Further, we ask that an exception to the Proclamation for H-1B physicians be applied evenly and fairly among employers across the country.

We are heartened this Administration has made combatting chronic disease a central theme of its health policy agenda. Pediatric gastroenterologists—together with pediatric dietitians, nurses, and other allied health professionals—are indispensable in caring for children with chronic diseases of the gastrointestinal tract, liver, pancreas, and nutritional systems, as well as in combatting the national obesity epidemic. Yet to meet the growing and complex needs of our nation’s children, we urgently need this Administration’s support to ensure an adequate workforce of physicians and pediatric specialists, including relief from current H-1B visa constraints.

We thank you in advance for your attention to our request. Should you have questions, please contact Camille Bonta, NASPGHAN policy advisor, at cbonta@summithealthconsulting.com or (202) 320-3658.

Sincerely,



Vicky Lee Ng, MD, FRCPC

President

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition

³ Sauer C, MD, Barnard J, MD, Vinci R, Strople J. Child Health Needs and the Pediatric Gastroenterology Workforce: 2020–2040

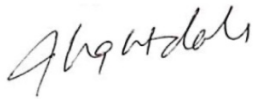
⁴ The American Board of Pediatrics. Retrieved 11/24/25 from <https://www.abp.org/dashboards/pediatric-subspecialists-ever-certified>



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cc: The Honorable Rand Paul
The Honorable Gary Peters
The Honorable Bill Cassidy
The Honorable Bernie Sanders
The Honorable Andrew Garbarino
The Honorable Bennie Thompson
The Honorable Brett Guthrie
The Honorable Frank Pallone