



**Office of the Health Care Advocate**  
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February 28, 2024

Re: Support for S.263

Dear Chair Lyons and Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare:

The Office of the Health Care Advocate (HCA) wishes to state its support for S.263. The HCA believes it is important that the state examine potential policy mechanisms to address access barriers for Vermonters and improve culturally responsive care.

The HCA would like to suggest two minor changes to the bill:

- 1) Edit proposed language in Section 1a: "The Board of Medical Practice shall convene a working group to develop proposals for harnessing the expertise of international medical school, nursing school and other trained health professional school graduates to increase Vermont's health care workforce.
- 2) Add proposed language to Section 1b: "The working group shall also examine barriers to the full utilization of J-1 waiver slots in Vermont and recommend potential solutions to increase enrollment in the J-1 waiver initiative and related programs."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

s\ Mike Fisher, Chief Health Care Advocate

s\ Sam Peisch, Health Policy Analyst