



Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2023: Bill Summary

Rep. Adam Smith (D- Washington) [introduced](#) the *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2023 (H.R.3731)* in the House of Representatives on May 25, 2023. This bill is one of three healthcare bills introduced by Rep. Smith in May of 2023 to lessen obstacles for immigrants who wish to enter the healthcare workforce. The other two bills are the *International Medical Graduate (IMG) Assistance Act (H.R. 3733)* and the *Professional's Access to Health (PATH) Workforce Integration Act (H.R. 3732)*.

The *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2023* would authorize and expand programs that make it easier for immigrants to enter the nursing or allied health professional workforce. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [predicted](#) that the United States will have a shortage of 195,400 nurses by 2031, and a shortage of up to 124,00 physicians in the next 12 years. This bill would help address the current healthcare worker shortage across the U.S., which is predicted to worsen in the future.

What would the *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act* do?

Under this bill, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will award grants to state, tribal, and local governments, and private organizations for covering specific costs to aid lawfully present immigrants who enter the nursing and allied health fields.

- These costs include fees related to education, training, or licensure and can help toward obtaining overseas academic or training records.
- Currently, [only U.S. citizens or nationals](#) are eligible to participate in the National Health Services Corps (NHSC). The *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act of 2023* gives lawfully present immigrants eligibility to participate in the NHSC, which provides scholarships and student loan repayment for health care workers who agree to work in areas with a shortage of health care providers.

In order to gain [eligibility](#) for grants to cover the costs of training and licensure, the individual must meet one of the following criteria:

- (1) lawfully admitted for permanent residence;
- (2) admitted as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA);
- (3) granted asylum under section 208 of such Act; or,
- (4) an immigrant otherwise authorized to be employed in the United States, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders.

Why would the *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act* be beneficial?

This bill would help address the shortage of health care workers in the U.S., which, as mentioned above, is set to include a shortage of 195,400 nurses by 2031. By allowing immigrants to access a wider range of occupations in the nursing and allied health fields, Congress can combat the shortage of health care workers in communities across the U.S. and in certain key healthcare professions. The bill would create affordable and accessible means for immigrants to work within

nursing or an allied health profession. The *Immigrants in Nursing and Allied Health Act* would provide the following benefits:

- **Allows Immigrants into the National Health Service Corp (NHSC).** The NHSC is a crucial program that places health care professionals in communities lacking in health care workers, while providing these workers with scholarships and loan repayment opportunities. Since it can be financially challenging to pursue studies in the health care field, NHSC gives health care workers the financial stability to serve communities which lack a sufficient number of health care professionals.
- **Expands Employment Opportunities.** The passage of this bill would help address underemployment among immigrants and would [allow greater access for immigrants](#) to become nurses, dental hygienists, dietitians, medical technologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, and speech language pathologists.
- **Provides Better Healthcare for Communities in Need.** This bill would provide a greater number of healthcare workers to communities with a severe lack of healthcare workers. With an increasing number of healthcare workers [leaving the field](#) due to burnout from the demanding COVID-19 pandemic and to retirement, the recruitment of qualified immigrants could be an efficient short-term approach.
- **Increases Immigrant Representation.** Allowing non-citizen immigrants to work within the health sector would help health care providers better mirror and serve the diversity already found in communities across the United States. The *Immigrant in Nursing and Allied Health Act* would help immigrants, lawfully admitted, to provide greater culturally competent services and address many of the healthcare needs of U.S. communities.

The National Immigration Forum would like to thank Mikesha Withanachchi, Policy and Advocacy Intern, for developing this bill summary.