

Obama opposes bringing nurses from overseas

Press Trust of India

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US President Barack [Obama](#) on Friday opposed the idea of inviting overseas [nurses](#), including from India, to fill up the huge shortfall the United States is facing right now.

America like most of the Western countries is faced with acute shortage of nurses and in recent years it has allowed medical personnel from India, China and Philippines to immigrate to work in hospitals.

"The notion that we would have to import nurses makes absolutely no sense," Obama told a gathering of health experts and lawmakers at a White House meeting on health care reforms. Instead, Obama argued that the best possible approach to meet this shortfall is to train people inside the country.

"For people who get fired up about the immigration debate and yet don't notice that we could be training nurses right here in the United States," he said responding to an observation made by Congresswoman Lois Capps from [California](#). "We have a huge shortage of nurses today. Estimates are that the US will be lacking over 500,000 nurses in the next seven years," said Democratic lawmaker Capps.

Last week, a legislation was introduced in the US Congress to create a special category of nursing [visas](#), which would facilitate much faster and easier bringing of trained nurses from Asian countries like India.

Called the "Nursing Relief Act of 2009" the legislation proposes to make provisions for the new category of visas for registered nurses with an annual limit of 50,000.

The legislation notes that there are more vacant nursing positions in the US than there are qualified registered nurses and [nursing school](#) candidates to fill those positions. And according to the Department of Labour, the current national nursing shortage exceeds 126,000.

Obama said there are a lot of people in the US who would love to be in the nursing profession, and yet the government is not able to providing them the resources to get them trained.

"That's something that we've got to fix. That should be a no-brainer. That should be a bipartisan no-brainer, to make sure that we've got the best possible nursing staffs in the country," Obama said amidst applause.