



December 10, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I would like to express our strong support for President Biden's nomination of Robert Califf, MD, MACC, FACP to serve as Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Dr. Califf is a well-respected cardiologist and member of the College whose public health experience and previous experience serving as FDA Commissioner will serve the country well in this role. It is vitally important to report Dr. Califf's nomination to the full Senate as quickly possible to ensure that FDA has the qualified and experienced permanent leadership in place to fully engage in responding to the ongoing public health emergency (PHE) caused by COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other public health crises like the opioid epidemic, youth tobacco use, and health inequities.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 161,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge, clinical expertise, and compassion to the preventive, diagnostic, and therapeutic care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

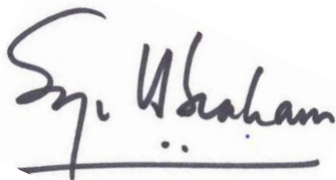
As an experienced clinical trialist, Dr. Califf brings a wealth of experience to the position. Currently, he is a professor of medicine at the Duke University School of Medicine, where he previously served as vice chancellor for health data science and founded and served as executive director of the Duke Clinical Research Institute. Dr. Califf is a renowned expert in clinical trial research and cardiovascular medicine and has led numerous landmark clinical trials, with more than 1,200 peer reviewed publications to his name. He also currently heads clinical policy and strategy for Verily and Google Health.

Previously, Dr. Califf served as the Commissioner of the FDA from 2016-2017. Prior to serving as Commissioner, Dr. Califf served as Deputy Commissioner for Medical Products and Tobacco at the FDA. Dr. Califf's time at the FDA was characterized by his fierce advocacy against tobacco, where he served when the agency issued final regulations asserting its authority over the e-cigarette and vaping industry, and has advocated to ban flavored tobacco, e-cigarette, and vaping products. FDA plays a vital role in maintaining the safety, efficacy and of drugs, biological products, and medical devices; facilitating innovation; and protecting the public health from food-borne illnesses and other threats. Dr. Califf's institutional knowledge and breadth of experience has prepared him to be able to enter the Commissioner role and immediately begin addressing current public health threats and taking agency action to respond to future needs.

In addition to his teaching, clinical, and government experience, Dr. Califf is also a member of the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine (IOM)), where he has served on several committees, including its policy committee. Dr. Califf has also served on various other prestigious advisory committees and boards, including the FDA Cardiorenal Advisory Panel; FDA Science Board's Subcommittee on Science and Technology; the board of Scientific Counselors for the National Library of Medicine; and advisory committees for National Cancer Institute, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Council of the National Institute on Aging.

Therefore, ACP strongly encourages the HELP Committee to swiftly report to the full Senate the appointment of Dr. Califf to the position of Commissioner of the FDA. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George M. Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

George M. Abraham, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA
President