

May 21, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
Department of Health & Human Services
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

On May 4, 2021 the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) released a consequential new report [Implementing High Quality Primary Care: Rebuilding the Foundation of Health Care](#). Our organizations, which represent the overwhelming majority of primary care physicians in the United States, wish to draw your attention to this important report and the emphasis the report places on the value of primary care to individuals, families, communities and a high-functioning health care system.

The NASEM report boldly calls primary care a “common good,” noting that primary care is “the only health care component where an increased supply is associated with better population health and more equitable outcomes.” As you well know, primary care is significantly undervalued and underfunded in the United States. Today, primary care accounts for 35% of health care visits while receiving only about 5% of health care expenditures. The report draws glaring distinctions between the investment and performance of primary care in the United States as compared to other countries, noting that “people in countries and health systems with high-quality primary care enjoy better health outcomes and more health equity.”

The report contains a series of recommendations organized under five implementation objectives. Each of these recommendations present opportunities to improve the health of individuals, families and communities through a more robust primary care workforce and primary care delivery system. Our organizations look forward to working with you to implement many of these objectives and in pursuit of our shared objectives of building a better, more appropriately financed primary care system and workforce in the United States. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss this report in the near future.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Physicians
Society of General Internal Medicine

American Board of Family Medicine
American Board of Pediatrics
American Board of Internal Medicine