

February 25, 2022

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Granger and Vice Chairman Shelby:

On behalf of the more than 590,000 physicians our organizations represent, we write to urge continued efforts to quickly finalize the FY 2022 appropriations process and to approve final spending legislation that is critically needed during this ongoing pandemic. Extended continuing resolutions bring uncertainty and make it more difficult for our health agencies to respond to the challenges at hand. Our organizations believe that it is essential that Congress prioritizes annual funding for public health, medical research, and the physician workforce.

Robust funding of our public health agencies is essential to support the nation's ongoing fight to confront the devastating effects of COVID-19 on the health of Americans. A long-term, multilayered medical and public health response is needed to contain COVID-19, bolster our overwhelmed health care system, ensure patients have access to medical care, and prepare for the next public health emergency. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)** are key pillars of our nation's public health and medical systems and sufficient funding for these agencies is vital.

Medical and public health research funding is particularly vulnerable to harm from continuing resolutions. Ensuring that our research infrastructure remains strong is particularly important as we work to better understand COVID-19 and the impact of the pandemic more broadly on the health of children and adults. We strongly urge support for research funding at the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** and the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**. In addition, we strongly support proposed increases for gun violence research at CDC and NIH. Gun violence is a public health epidemic, and recent mass shootings around the country, along with other sources of firearm violence and injury, underscore that this remains a serious issue. The foundation of a public health approach to gun violence is rigorous research that can accurately quantify an issue and identify opportunities for reducing its related morbidity and mortality. Moreover, we strongly support recent proposals to significantly increase the funding of research and programs to address the current mental health and substance use disorder crisis that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Our physician workforce was experiencing significant challenges before the pandemic and today stands near a breaking point. Our members have been serving on the frontlines of the pandemic for nearly two years, often at great personal risk and sacrifice. Despite an overwhelmed health care system and a consistent lack of adequate support for frontline health care workers, they continue to step up, serve their communities, and save lives. Congress must redouble its commitment to maintaining a strong

physician workforce. At a minimum, Congress must address the growing shortage of physicians, a significant obstacle to providing care for our patients. Robust funding for the **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)** is critical to allow the federal government to respond to these challenges and invest in workforce programs that support a well-trained physician workforce.

Thank you for your work to support our health care system during this crucial time.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American Osteopathic Association
American Psychiatric Association