



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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aamc.org

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
239 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health Education, Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden, Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Crapo, and Ranking Member Burr:

On behalf of the AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges), I write to urge you to support the nomination of the Honorable Xavier Becerra, JD for Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Secretary-designate Becerra's experience in health policy and patient advocacy makes him a well-qualified candidate to serve in this role. In addition, his leadership experience will prove useful as he guides the many agencies of HHS as the department not only continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also prepares for future public health emergencies and addresses other critical health care issues, including health coverage.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; more than 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 179,000 full-time faculty members, 92,000 medical students, 140,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

HHS is critical to defeating COVID-19, as demonstrated already by the creation of a COVID Response Team within the agency. HHS and its agencies also are dedicated to promoting the nation's health and well-being, including through medical research, patient care, the health care

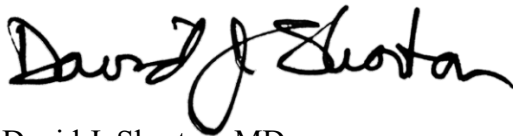
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workforce, and community health. Academic Medicine has been defining the front lines in addressing the pandemic. In addition, the missions of HHS and its agencies also are key to the mission of the AAMC and are core for our member medical schools and teaching hospitals. Secretary-designate Becerra's leadership experience – such as the efforts to protect patients' access to health care and establish health equity initiatives that he led during his tenure as Attorney General of the State of California – will be an asset in this role. He also brings health policy expertise from his experience on the House Committee on Ways and Means where he championed affordable, comprehensive health care coverage for patients.

As the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic continue, we urge the Senate to proceed quickly with Secretary-designate Becerra's confirmation to ensure that HHS has leadership at the helm now to coordinate an effective response to COVID as well as proceed on the other pressing health care needs of the country. We look forward to engaging with Secretary-designate Becerra to address important issues facing the nation, including our mutual goal of improving the health of people everywhere.

Please feel free to contact me or AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer Karen Fisher, JD (kfisher@aamc.org) if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Skorton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

David J. Skorton, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
Association of American Medical Colleges

cc: Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell