

February 24, 2021

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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 Chairman Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of the nation's hospitalists, the Society of Hospital Medicine (SHM) strongly supports the nomination of Vivek Murthy, M.D., M.B.A. to the position of Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Murthy is a well-respected hospitalist with decades of public health expertise and brings unparalleled capability to a role that is incredibly important during a once in a lifetime public health crisis.

Hospitalists are physicians who manage the clinical care of acutely ill, hospitalized patients. The hospital medicine team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and non-clinical staff who work together to ensure patients in the hospital receive the highest quality care possible. In addition to their core clinical expertise, hospitalists work to enhance the performance of hospitals and healthcare systems and engage in teaching, research, and leadership in the field of general hospital medicine.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the care of severely ill COVID positive patients, hospitalists found themselves at the frontlines of the national response. Every day hospitalists risk their health and safety to ensure all patients, including COVID patients, receive the highest quality care possible. Dr. Murthy's training and experience as a hospitalist, combined with his extensive public health expertise, makes him particularly qualified to act as Surgeon General during this unprecedented pandemic.

Dr. Murthy was previously named co-chair of the COVID-19 Advisory Board. In this role, he led the development of the incoming Biden

Administration's COVID-19 response, which included vaccine distribution logistics and production. The depth of his involvement with the Biden administration's COVID-19 response plan will allow him to begin his critical work immediately once he is confirmed by the Senate.

Dr. Murthy's previous service as Surgeon General from 2014-2017 gives him added advantage and institutional knowledge to confront the pressing public health needs of the nation. His historic letter to physicians on the opioid epidemic in 2016 underscores his team-based approach to solving large, complex issues. In addition, he emphasized the importance of preventive care that is grounded in nutrition, healthy eating, physical activity, and emotional well-being. During his tenure, he managed the nation's response to Ebola, Zika, and the Flint, MI water crisis. He knows there are many public health needs simultaneous to and that will emerge after the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are confident in Dr. Murthy's ability to lead the nation in confronting and defeating current challenges and those that may arise during his service.

Dr. Murthy's track record of public service, public health expertise, and previous experience as Surgeon General demonstrates his unparalleled qualifications to serve in this role. As Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy will bring a demonstrated commitment to public service coupled with the quality-driven, results-oriented mindset of a hospitalist physician.

We urge you to advance his nomination to the position of Surgeon General of the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Howell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Eric Howell, MD, MHM  
Chief Executive Officer  
Society of Hospital Medicine