

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2010

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Acting Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We the undersigned Members of Congress are writing to request that you include a surgeon among your upcoming appointments to the National Health Care Workforce Commission. While our views may differ on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), we agree that a health care workforce shortage is upon us and swift action must be taken to adequately and accurately address the problem.

We believe it is important that the Commission, appointed to develop an action plan aimed at recruiting, training and retaining a workforce that meets both current and future needs, includes physicians with real world expertise and firsthand knowledge of the issues at stake. More specifically, we believe it is imperative that a surgeon be an active participant.

Over the last three decades, as the population of the United States has continued to grow, the surgical workforce has held steady or decreased. Many hospitals are now finding it difficult to recruit qualified surgeons. The number of general surgeons, who play an important role in staffing trauma centers, has declined significantly on a per capita basis over the last few decades. In fact, there are currently 1183 counties nationwide without a single general surgeon and 958 counties with no surgeons of any type.

Clearly, our nation faces current and future surgical shortages that must be addressed. While Congress has taken some steps to address these workforce challenges, more must be done to address the looming shortage of surgeons to ensure that all Americans have access to quality surgical care. Given the long lead time involved in building up surgical residency programs and the 8 to 12 years it takes to educate and train a surgeon, it is vitally important that surgeons be represented on the National Health Care Workforce Commission from the outset.

We look forward to your response, and to working with you to ensure that our nation has the robust health care workforce necessary to meet the needs of all patients.

Sincerely,



Daniel B. Maffei
Member of Congress



Tom Price, M.D.
Member of Congress

W. Todd Akin

W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress

Glenn Thompson

Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress

Michael A. Arcuri

Michael A. Arcuri
Member of Congress

Bill Posey

Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Joe Wilson

Joe Wilson
Member of Congress

Marsha Blackburn

Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress

Kenny Marchant

Kenny Marchant
Member of Congress

Michael Burgess

Michael Burgess
Member of Congress

Ron Klein

Ron Klein
Member of Congress

Rodney Alexander

Rodney Alexander
Member of Congress

Kay Granger

Kay Granger
Member of Congress

Jason Altmire

Jason Altmire
Member of Congress

Shelley Berkley

Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress

Parker Griffith

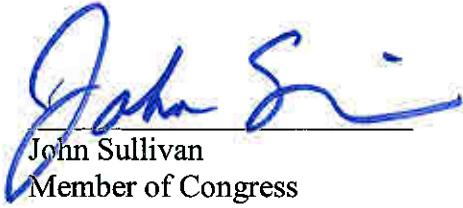
Parker Griffith
Member of Congress



Phil Roe
Member of Congress



Joseph R. Pitts
Member of Congress



John Sullivan
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



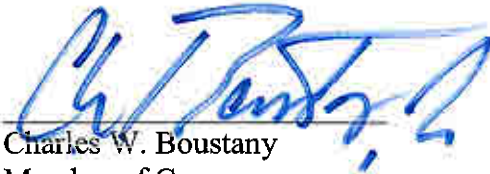
Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress



Devin Nunes
Member of Congress



Kendrick B. Meek
Member of Congress



Charles W. Boustany
Member of Congress



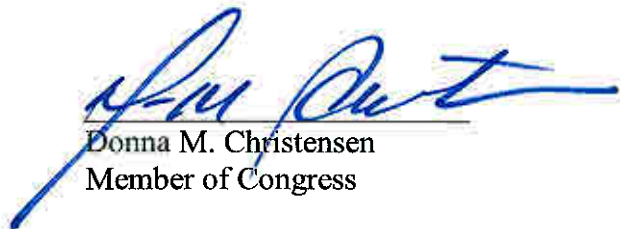
Bobby Bright
Member of Congress



Lynn A. Westmoreland
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud

Michael H. Michaud
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Vernon J. Ehlers

Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress

Roy Blunt

Roy Blunt
Member of Congress

Pete Sessions

Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

Barney Frank

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Brian P. Bilbray

Brian P. Bilbray
Member of Congress

William L. Owens

William L. Owens
Member of Congress

Randy J. Forbes

Randy J. Forbes
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppensberger

C.A. Dutch Ruppensberger
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velazquez

Nydia M. Velazquez
Member of Congress

Howard Coble

Howard Coble
Member of Congress

Mark Steven Kirk

Mark Steven Kirk
Member of Congress



David Wu
Member of Congress