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The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Acting Commissioner Mark A. Morgan
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan and Acting Commissioner Morgan:

As the largest professional association for physicians and medical students, and the umbrella organization for state and national specialty medical societies, the American Medical Association (AMA) has been, and continues to be, deeply committed to ensuring the health and safety of all individuals regardless of immigration status.

We are writing to express our ongoing concerns that conditions in Customs and Border Protection (CBP) custody are inconsistent with evidence-based recommendations for appropriate care and treatment of children and pregnant women. Conditions in CBP facilities, which include open toilets, constant light exposure, insufficient food and water, extreme temperatures, and forcing pregnant women and children to sleep on cement floors, are traumatizing. Such facilities are simply not appropriate places for children or for pregnant women. We, along with numerous other medical and mental health organizations, have offered our [strong support](#) for passage of H.R. 3239, the “Humanitarian Standards for Individuals in Customs and Border Protection Custody Act,” and urge Members of Congress to work to advance this type of legislation as part of any humanitarian response to the situation at the southern border.

Families seeking refuge in the U.S. already endure emotional and physical stress, which is only exacerbated when they are separated from one another or held in family detention facilities during the pendency of their immigration proceedings. It is well known that childhood trauma and adverse childhood experiences created by inhumane treatment often create negative health impacts that can last an individual’s entire lifespan. Given our concerns, we strongly urge the Administration and Congress to work with the AMA and other medical and mental health care experts to develop policies that ensure the health of children and families is protected throughout the immigration process. We further urge the Administration and Congress to work together to give priority to supporting families and protecting the health and well-being of the children within those families.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD