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January 21, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

The American Medical Association (AMA) strongly supports Xavier Becerra for the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Throughout his career, Attorney General Becerra has worked to strengthen our nation's health care system. During his time in Congress, Mr. Becerra served on the important Ways and Means Committee, which oversees Medicare and other important health care programs. Mr. Becerra labored to strengthen Medicare and ensure its long-term viability as well as address poverty issues for families that have the potential to affect their health. In particular, the AMA worked with Mr. Becerra to pass the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and to eliminate Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula.

As California's Attorney General, Mr. Becerra worked extensively on a series of health care issues of importance to the nation and to the AMA. Mr. Becerra led a coalition of 17 states in defending the ACA in the Federal District Court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals case, *Texas v. U.S.*, which challenged the constitutionality of the ACA. Mr. Becerra also led 20 states and DC in filing a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court seeking review of the Fifth Circuit's decision in *Texas v. U.S.* The decision held the individual mandate of the ACA unconstitutional and called into question whether the remaining provisions of the ACA could still stand, including those that protect and provide coverage to Americans with pre-existing conditions. Also, as California Attorney General, Mr. Becerra pursued antitrust enforcement against hospital consolidations that distort the health care marketplace; worked to protect access to reproductive health care and for LGBTQ individuals; and joined other state Attorneys General in suing the Trump administration over its public charge rule. In all these cases, his efforts targeted at promoting public health and protecting access to care for chronically underserved individuals and populations.

The raging COVID-19 pandemic demands strong and consistent federal leadership, and it is imperative that the Senate act quickly to confirm Mr. Becerra to serve as Secretary of HHS. The AMA urges the Senate to confirm his appointment immediately.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD