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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:

On behalf of the American Medical Association's (AMA) Board of Trustees and members, I am writing to enthusiastically support Rachel Levine, MD to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services. The AMA has worked with Dr. Levine to address the epidemic of opioid-related overdose deaths in her capacity as the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health. Dr. Levine was an early adopter of an AMA-supported "standing order" for individuals to receive naloxone without a patient-specific prescription—an action that likely has saved thousands of lives in Pennsylvania. She also has been a strong supporter of efforts to increase access to medications to help treat opioid use disorder. Dr. Levine has been integral to Pennsylvania's cross-departmental team to remove barriers to treatment for opioid use disorder.

The Assistant Secretary of Health is always a critical position, but especially now as our nation simultaneously faces the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide epidemic of drug overdose deaths. Dr. Levine has extensive public health experience and currently serves as the President of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. She also has extensive government experience, even serving as Pennsylvania's Physician General. Dr. Levine has led Pennsylvania's response to COVID-19. We understand from the Pennsylvania Medical Society that Dr. Levine has been a good partner and has been very accessible during the pandemic.

Dr. Levine's appointment would make her the nation's highest-ranking transgender health official. Her appointment would advance inclusion and visibility in medical leadership and further empower her work to address inequity in our health care system.

With the pandemic raging it is critically important for the Senate to move quickly to confirm Dr. Levine.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD