

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), it gives me great pleasure to support the nomination of Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, MBA, FACP, of West Virginia to be Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).

The AMA is pleased that, once confirmed, Dr. Gupta will be the first physician to head this critically important office. Dr. Gupta is an AMA member and former Health Commissioner for the State of West Virginia, where he worked closely with the West Virginia State Medical Association. Dr. Gupta is recognized for his data-driven work to identify populations at high risk for overdose in one of the states hit hardest by the drug overdose epidemic. Harm reduction is a vital component of efforts to end this epidemic, and Dr. Gupta expanded access to the overdose reversal drug naloxone in West Virginia as well as syringe exchange services. He also helped increase access to medication for the treatment of opioid use disorder, which is an important element of the AMA's strategy to address this accelerating epidemic.

Dr. Gupta is a nationally recognized leader in the effort to address drug overdose and death and improve public health outcomes. He currently serves as Chief Medical and Health Officer and Senior Vice President at the March of Dimes, Clinical Professor in the Department of Medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine, Adjunct Professor in the Department of Health Policy, Management and Leadership in the West Virginia University School of Public Health, as well as visiting faculty at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. In addition, he is a member of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act Review Committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine and the National Advisory Council to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

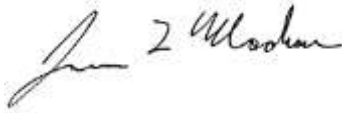
The AMA has worked closely with the ONDCP for a number of years, as it has become an increasingly important arm of the Executive Office of the President since nationwide drug overdose deaths reached epidemic levels. Although the office continues to play an important role working with law enforcement to address the national and international drug trade, its efforts to

The Honorable Dick Durbin
The Honorable Chuck Grassley
September 14, 2021
Page 2

advance prevention and treatment for substance use disorders and provide alternatives for those accused of drug-related offenses, such as drug courts, are substantial and essential.

With the recent acceleration in drug overdose deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to illicitly manufactured fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, methamphetamine, and cocaine, it is exactly the right time to have a proven physician leader at the helm of the ONDCP. The AMA strongly recommends that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary quickly confirm Rahul Gupta, MD as ONDCP Director.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD