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thepcc.org

PCC Letter of Support for Dr. Vivek Murthy's Nomination as Surgeon General

March 5, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr,

The Primary Care Collaborative strongly supports the nomination of Dr. Vivek Murthy to become U.S. Surgeon General. As a multi-stakeholder coalition of 60+ organizational members representing clinicians, payers, purchasers, and patients, the Primary Care Collaborative (PCC) calls for public and private leadership to take bold actions to bolster the health of our nation. Dr. Murthy has already proven that he is the right person to lead that charge. In the midst of this global public health crisis, he brings experience, vision and evidence-based sensibility to get us through the COVID-19 pandemic stronger for the health challenges that lie ahead.

The PCC has long advocated for the science, systems, and personal relationships to ensure individuals and families can lead healthy lives. Dr. Murthy's impressive experience and adept public messaging has consistently lifted up all three. First, at a time of critical need for vaccine acceptance and better information on the coronavirus, he has committed to unconditionally basing the country's public health efforts in science and effectively promoting those messages to health care workers and the broader public. Today, such leadership is critical: vaccine hesitancy is alarmingly high, particularly [among communities of color](#) who have been [hit hardest](#) by the COVID-19 pandemic. Primary care clinicians are [well-positioned](#) to advise patients on the importance of vaccines, but they need support from federal leaders and robust education campaigns to complement their efforts—the kind of messaging Dr. Murthy has pledged to lead as Surgeon General.

Second, Dr. Murthy has a proven commitment to strengthening the country's public health and health care delivery systems to better serve patients and their communities. COVID-19 has further exposed a wide gulf between public health and primary care, as well as the underinvestment in both sectors. Going forward, we believe the two must be better-resourced and closely linked to ensure good health. Primary care has played a key role triaging, tracking, and treating COVID-19 cases, but needs better coordination, bi-directional communication with local and state officials, and more support. Dr. Murthy will continue his work to ensure health care professionals and practices work collaboratively with public health officials, businesses, universities, researchers, and community leaders to advance better health, particularly among under-served communities.

Finally, Dr. Murthy defines health the way the primary care community defines health: as the physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals. He has brought prominent attention to the devastating impact of substance use disorder (SUD) in this country, including educating clinicians on the risks of prescribed opioid painkillers and calling for better screening and evidence-based treatment for SUD as a chronic condition. More recently, he recognized the dire toll the pandemic has taken on the mental health of Americans, calling for better insurance coverage for behavioral health, school-based mental health counseling, and increased integration of behavioral health and primary care. In a Green Center/PCC national survey of primary care clinicians, nearly [90% report](#) seeing higher levels of mental health concerns among their patients and [over half say](#) they field weekly calls from patients or colleagues who are experiencing a mental health crisis. We urgently need a Surgeon General who will bring attention and resources to addressing this critical need.

The Primary Care Collaborative offers its strong endorsement of Dr. Murthy to become U.S. Surgeon General for a second time. He is a proven leader who has effectively confronted health crises under the Obama Administration; we now need him to lead again to help our country recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and help re-invent a better public health system in the process. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support.

Sincerely,



Ann Greiner
President & CEO
Primary Care Collaborative

PCC Executive Members

Below is a list of the Primary Care Collaborative's executive members that pay dues to the organization and support its mission. Membership does not indicate explicit endorsement of this letter.

AARP

Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC)

Alzheimer's Association

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

American Academy of PAs (AAPA)

American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP)

American Board of Family Medicine Foundation (ABFM Foundation)

American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation (ABIM Foundation)

American Cancer Society

American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP)

American College of Lifestyle Medicine (ACLM)

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFPP)

American College of Osteopathic Internists (ACOI)

American College of Physicians (ACP)

American Psychiatric Association Foundation

American Psychological Association

America's Agenda

Anthem

Ascension Medical Group

Black Women's Health Imperative (BWHI)

Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield

Community Care of North Carolina

CVS Health

Geisinger Health

Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care

HealthTeamWorks

Humana, Inc.

IBM

Innovaccer

Institute for Patient and Family-Centered Care (IPFCC)

Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Inc.

Johnson & Johnson

Mathematica Policy Research

Mental Health America

Merck & Co.

Morehouse School of Medicine - National Center for Primary Care

National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions

National Association of ACOs (NAACOS)
National Coalition on Health Care
National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health (NIIOH)
National PACE Association
National Partnership for Women and Families
NCQA
Purchaser Business Group on Health (PBGH)
PCC EHR Solutions
Pediatric Innovation Center
Primary Care Development Corporation (PCDC)
Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM)
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine (STFM)
SS&C Health
St. Louis Area Business Health Coalition
Takeda Pharmaceuticals U.S.A.
The Verden Group's Patient Centered Solutions
UPMC Health Plan
URAC
