



November 20, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-elect
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President-elect Biden,

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents more than 136,700 family physicians and medical students across the United States, we write to congratulate you on your election as the 46th President of the United States. We look forward to working closely with your new Administration and the 117th Congress to ensure all Americans have access to high-quality healthcare. This transition in power comes in the midst of a global pandemic that is testing the strength and vitality of our nation's health care system and the people it serves.

Family physicians are uniquely qualified to provide comprehensive care for the entire family – from birth through end-of-life. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages and sexes, each organ system and every disease entity. It is a specialty in breadth that integrates the biological, clinical and behavioral sciences. This care includes: caring for patients regardless of age or health condition, understanding community-level factors and social determinants of health, providing support as the patient's first contact for health concerns, helping patients navigate specialty and hospital care coordination, leveraging data and technology to improve the quality of care, and assessing the patient's family medical history to dictate the appropriate degrees of care. In the United States, one in five office visits are conducted by family physicians, with 195 million visits to family physicians annually.

The policies identified here will help ensure that the Americans' health care continues to be prioritized, and we believe there are opportunities to work with your Administration and the 117th Congress on a number of these priorities.

Health Care for All – COVID-19 has underscored the importance of all Americans having access to quality, affordable health care. The Affordable Care Act has formed a foundation for a health care system that provides meaningful coverage, including preventive services benefits and protections for patients with pre-existing conditions, and we are committed to building on what works and redesigning what does not.

Strengthening the Workforce – Primary care has never been more important than today and yet continues to face some of the greatest challenges to achieving viability in our current health care system. The United States will need 52,000 more primary care physicians by 2025 in order to prevent shortages in the primary care workforce. We continue to work for creating a robust primary care workforce that is best positioned to serve all communities, including our underserved and rural populations.

STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

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Health Equity – The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the gaps in our nation’s health care system and the health impacts of systemic racism in our society, which must be corrected to ensure we improve the health of all Americans. We are working to develop strategies that promote health equity through identifying and incorporating social determinants of health in all health care delivery systems – with the goal of prioritizing preventive health and management of chronic conditions.

Value-Based Payment Reforms – We recognize the importance of improving both the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of care. Through the expansion of delivery system and payment reforms, we can drive value for patients through continuous and comprehensive contact with the goal of improving patients’ health outcomes and the doctor-patient experience. To be successful, reforms need to re-emphasize the importance of primary care and prevention.

Telehealth – COVID-19 has demonstrated the adaptability of serving patients outside the traditional in-person visits. Our members saw an increase and satisfaction in the utilization of telemedicine to augment the doctor-patient experience. We believe the current regulatory framework must be modernized to support the thoughtful integration of telehealth as part of a coordinated health care ecosystem.

On behalf of the AAFP, we again congratulate you on your election to the presidency and stand ready to partner with you and your Administration on ways that we can work through the challenges facing our nation’s health care system in order to improve the lives of all Americans. For more information, please contact Stephanie Quinn, Senior Vice President for Advocacy, Practice Advancement, and Policy, at squinn@aaafp.org.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ada D. Stewart, M.D." The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Ada Stewart, M.D.
President