



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
655 K Street, NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20001-2399
T 202 828 0400
aamc.org

February 19, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) is pleased to support the nomination of Rachel Levine, MD, to be the Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and urges swift confirmation of Dr. Levine's nomination.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; more than 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 179,000 full-time faculty members, 92,000 medical students, 140,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences. Consistent with their missions, AAMC members have been on the front lines of the COVID-19 response, from activating and refining hospital and community surge plans, advancing research to identify promising diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines, and supporting local public health mitigation strategies.

As you know, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) oversees HHS's public health agencies and programs, several presidential advisory committees, regional health offices, the Office of the Surgeon General, and the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. The AAMC believes that Dr. Levine's career experience as a clinician researcher and public health official, most recently serving as Pennsylvania's health secretary, provide invaluable qualifications to lead OASH. For example, the public health challenges Dr. Levine tackled in Pennsylvania – including addressing the opioid crisis, combatting infectious diseases such as

HIV and Hepatitis C, and responding to COVID-19 – show her breadth of experience and commitment to public service. Before her role as health secretary, Dr. Levine was a professor at Penn State College of Medicine while also providing clinical care at Penn State Hershey Medical Center, specializing in the treatment of adolescents and patients with eating disorders. She additionally has worked to raise awareness on gender identity issues and has advocated for equitable health care coverage, and she would serve as an important voice in efforts to address discrimination in health care.

OASH has a profound influence, both immediately and longer-term, in shaping the environment for public health and guiding the nation's response to public health emergencies. The AAMC believes that Dr. Levine's experience, leadership, public service, and dedication are ideal qualifications for the role of Assistant Secretary for Health during this critical time and in the future, and we hope that the Senate will move expeditiously to complete her confirmation.

The AAMC is grateful for your attention and the opportunity to provide these comments in support of Dr. Levine's nomination. Please contact me or AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer Karen Fisher, JD (kfisher@aamc.org) if you believe the AAMC can be of assistance or provide further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Skorton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David J. Skorton, MD
President and Chief Executive Officer
Association of American Medical Colleges

cc: Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions Committee
Karen Fisher, JD