



**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
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May 14, 2019

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
Chair  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security and  
Governmental Affairs  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write regarding H.R. 1608, the Federal Advisory Committee Act Amendments of 2019, and the unique challenges that the bill may pose for peer review and the ability of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to respond nimbly to emerging issues and scientific opportunities.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members are all 154 accredited U.S. medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 173,000 full-time faculty members, 89,000 medical students, 129,000 resident physicians, and more than 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

The AAMC appreciates the intent of H.R. 1608 in increasing transparency in federal advisory committees, as well as recent efforts to ensure that the bill would not inadvertently undermine NIH's peer review process. At the same time, however, we remain concerned that the language in H.R. 1608, in its current form, could unintentionally impose substantial burden on voluntary peer reviewers and result in impractical backlogs and challenges for the peer review process at NIH and other agencies.

As the Committee considers the legislation, we respectfully request that you engage the NIH stakeholder community to identify opportunities to avoid these potential unintended consequences while maintaining the bill's commitment to greater transparency across the federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen D. Fisher".

Karen Fisher, J.D.  
Chief Public Policy Officer