



February 3, 2014

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman  
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions  
United States Senate  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Harkin and Alexander:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Dr. Vivek Hallegere Murthy as the next Surgeon General of the United States. Dr. Murthy has made a remarkable impression on me in the few interactions we have shared, and judging by what I know about him I feel he could make a great Surgeon General. In today's world, we need a Surgeon General who is committed to a prevention agenda and a health system that incentivizes primary care and quality of care, and who also keeps the position relevant and cutting-edge, particularly for our young people growing up in an increasingly globalized society. As Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy's impressive track record of accomplishments as an innovative and well-respected thought leader in health care will prove to be invaluable to the American people.

I would also like to address and respond to the controversy of this nomination for Surgeon General coming from outside of the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. As a proud veteran of the USPHS who holds the utmost respect for the Commissioned Corps, I also continue to disagree with my colleagues who hold that the Surgeon General must come from within the Commissioned Corps. I myself was appointed as Director of the CDC from outside the Commissioned Corps, and as you know, had the opportunity to serve in government for eight years in the Clinton Administration and one year in the George W. Bush Administration, becoming Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary for Health. I had a great working relationship with the Corps during my years of government service and was able to appoint Deputies from within the Commissioned Corps, which turned out to be excellent decisions. But appointing persons from outside of the Commissioned Corps not only enhances the diversity of the Public Health Service, it has also in the past enabled the President and Senate to bring in perspectives that have been important in achieving important public health goals such as childhood immunization, the Tuskegee Apology, and diversity in leadership at every level. I think it would be a great disservice to constrain the appointment of Surgeon General to within the Commissioned Corps.

The American people look to the Office of the Surgeon General for credible information based on the best available public health science, not politics, not religion, and not personal opinion. A highlight of my service was the opportunity I had to release the first ever Surgeon General's Reports on Mental Health, Overweight and Obesity, Sexual Health, Disabilities, Oral Health, and Youth Violence Prevention. In addition, my work in the communities of Watts, California, Cleveland, Ohio, Atlanta, Georgia, and Nashville, Tennessee greatly enhanced my perspective

and ability to reach the communities that had not been adequately reached before with the goal of eliminating disparities in health. I have faith that as Surgeon General, Dr. Murthy can continue to carry this torch to fulfill a sacred trust with the American people.

The Office of Surgeon General requires a strong and thoughtful leader who can navigate political pressures to champion health promotion for the American People, and Dr. Murthy's has proven his capabilities in that capacity. We need a Surgeon General who can connect with people across generations, cultures, and political persuasions to empower Americans to take responsibility for and improve their health. I feel that Dr. Murthy meets all of these qualifications superbly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Satcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Satcher" clearly legible.

David Satcher, MD, PhD  
Director, Satcher Health Leadership Institute  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
16<sup>th</sup> United States Surgeon General