

March 27, 2023

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2313 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ami Bera, M.D.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
172 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Joyce, M.D.  
U.S. House of Representatives  
152 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Peters  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1201 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bucshon, Bera, Joyce, and Peters:

On behalf of the more than 84,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), I would like to express our strong support for the *Ensuring Access to General Surgery Act* (H.R. 1781). This important legislation would direct the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to study and define general surgery workforce shortage areas and grant the Secretary of Health and Human Services the authority to provide a general surgery shortage area designation.

General surgeons are uniquely trained and qualified to provide certain necessary, lifesaving procedures, making them an essential element of a community-based health system. However, unlike other key providers, general surgeons do not currently have a formal workforce shortage area designation. Recent reports from [HRSA](#) as well as the [WWAMI Rural Health Research Center](#) show a maldistribution of the surgical workforce, with widespread and significant shortages of general surgeons, particularly in rural areas. Unfortunately, current available data are not able to indicate if the supply of general surgeons in a geographic area is adequate to provide access to the services demanded by the population, largely because there is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes a surgical shortage.

Optimal quality, the centerpiece of ACS' mission, is not achievable without optimal access. H.R. 1781 will allow HRSA to determine what constitutes a surgical shortage and designate areas where patients lack access to surgical services, providing a valuable new tool for increasing patient access to the full spectrum of high-quality health care, regardless of geographic location. Thank you for your efforts and leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to ensure enactment of this important legislation.

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Sincerely,



Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS  
Executive Director & CEO