

August 11, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor,  
and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray:

We write to thank you for your longstanding support of Washington State's strong trauma care system. Indeed, your efforts have played an important role in sustaining a model of best practices for Washington trauma centers that are emulated by developing trauma systems across the nation.

We also thank you and your staff for working with our institutions and representatives of the Trauma Center Association of America (TCAA) for more than four years to develop legislation that will modernize and authorize funding for existing trauma care and systems grant programs in the Public Health Service Act.

It has been more than a decade since Congress restructured federal trauma center and system grant programs as part of the Affordable Care Act, including your legislation, the National Trauma Center Stabilization Act, and Senator Jack Reed's legislation, the Trauma Care Systems Planning and Development Act.

These grants were designed to ensure that all Americans, no matter where they reside or travel, have access to high-quality trauma care. Unfortunately, Congress has not appropriated the funding for these programs as intended.

During the decade since these programs have gone unfunded, trauma has remained the leading cause of death in Americans younger than age 45; the number and scope of mass casualty events have increased; and the viability and long-term financial health of trauma centers have decreased.

As part of its work with your staff, TCAA commissioned a survey by Avalere that found more than half of trauma centers are not adequately prepared to respond to a mass casualty event due to a lack of resources – particularly for training and education, clinical staff recruitment and retention, and surge capacity. All these underlying pressures have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on the staffing front.

We hope that our joint efforts with you and your staff, and Sen. Reed and his staff, will yield bipartisan legislation that will be considered by the House and Senate this year. We stand ready to assist you in any way we can to advance this legislation to ensure that all Americans have access to life-saving trauma care.

Sincerely,

EvergreenHealth

Kadlec Regional Medical Center

Mary Bridge Children's Hospital & Health Network

Skagit Regional Health

St. Joseph Medical Center

Trauma Center Association of America