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September 7, 2021

The Honorable Ami Bera, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Larry Bucshon, MD
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Scott Peters
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Bera, Bucshon, Peters, and Mullin:

On behalf of the more than 82,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), I write in support of the *Ensuring Access to General Surgery Act of 2021* (H.R. 5149). This important legislation would direct the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), to study and define general surgery workforce shortage areas and grant the Secretary with the authority to provide a general surgery shortage area designation.

General surgeons are uniquely trained and solely 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. A congressionally mandated 2020 report, conducted by HRSA, examined surgical shortage areas and found a maldistribution of the surgical workforce, with widespread and significant shortages of general surgeons, particularly in rural areas. The designation of formal surgical shortage areas would help address this critical workforce shortage.

The ACS strongly supports the *Ensuring Access to General Surgery Act of 2021*, which will help ensure access to high quality surgical care, regardless of geographic location. Thank you for your efforts and continued leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you toward enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS
Executive Director

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