June 20, 2016

To: Leadership of the American College of Surgeons & American Surgical Association

Re: Report from 2016 Health Policy Scholarship

I wish to thank the American College of Surgeons and the American Surgical Association for supporting my attendance at the Leadership Program in Health Policy and Management sponsored by the Heller School at Brandeis University. I can honestly say that this is one of the best educational programs I have ever attended. The program focused on knowledge and skills that are relevant to every surgeon’s practice and enhanced our understanding of the changing world of healthcare that impacts everything we do. The program was well organized with outstanding access to world class experts such as Stuart Altman and John Chilingerian. Topics covered included: the history and current state of healthcare reform, the fundamentals of health care economics, understanding Medicare physician payment models, strategic thinking and strategic planning, development of high performance teams, patient flow and hospital physics, leadership styles and leading effective change, the basics of financial and managerial accounting, and managing conflict and negotiation strategies. We were provided with practical tools to enhance this knowledge base and apply to our individual practice issues.

I also enjoyed hearing an update from Dr. Frank Opelka regarding the activities of the ACS Washington Office and ACS advocacy efforts. This educational program allows the participants to be informed advocates and I look forward to supporting this effort at the 2017 ACS Leadership and Advocacy Summit.

Another major advantage of this program was the opportunity to interact with a fascinating group of surgeons from a wide variety of specialties in a wide range of practice environments. The format of the program, which houses all participants at the conference center and provides all meals for the group, fostered networking and many in depth discussions of the course material. I value the contacts I have made through this program and feel I have made lasting relationships that I can draw on for future advice.

This program covered an incredible amount of material over just 7 days and left me hungry for more. We were provided with excellent reading material including two books to continue our education. We also learned that the Heller School offers an MBA program specifically for Healthcare professionals which I hope to take advantage of in the future.
In summary, I am very grateful for the opportunity to attend this outstanding program. I would highly recommend this program to any surgeon seeking a greater understanding of health care policy or moving into a leadership position in a healthcare system. I look forward to working with the ACS and the ASA to addressing these challenging issues.

Sincerely,

Eileen M. Bulger, MD
Professor of Surgery
Chief of Trauma