

April 22, 2026

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart, Chair
Subcommittee on National Security, Department of
State, and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations Washington,
DC 20515

The Honorable Lois Frankel, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security, Department of
State, and Related Programs
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Frankel:

On behalf of the 12 undersigned organizations, we urge you to support the inclusion of \$4 million for Neglected Surgical Conditions within the National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Appropriations Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027. Such investment in global surgical care would transform the lives of millions of children and adults around the world.

Each year, global deaths from conditions requiring surgical care far exceed those from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria – combined.¹ However, the burden of conditions requiring surgical intervention continues to be neglected as a public health strategy. These conditions, including cleft lip and cleft palate, club foot, cataracts, hernias, female obstetric fistulas and other maternal related surgeries, and untreated traumatic injuries, are correctable conditions with proven best practices.

By directing \$4 million through the State Department for a public-private partnership pilot program, the U.S. can lead the effort to transform health systems in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs), which has the potential to save 17 million lives per year and avert \$12.3 trillion in lost GDP in LMICs over the next 15 years. The investment in surgical systems also supports pandemic preparedness plans as the increased capacity can be repurposed for treatment capacity during pandemics.² This pilot-program will operate in southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras and will be funded by both \$4 million in Congressional appropriations (FY 2027) and \$4 million in matching funds from private donors consisting of nonprofits, business leaders, and universities. This project will deliver life-changing surgical care to vulnerable populations, train and empower local medical professionals, and promote regional healthcare sustainability. The program will also support U.S. national interests by addressing health migration drivers, create new demand for U.S. surgical and medical device technologies, and create a blueprint to scale in other middle-low-income countries.

The World Bank identified essential surgical care as one of the most cost-effective health interventions available and a health priority that is within reach for countries around the world.³ Additionally, World Health Assembly adopted a resolution in 2015, co-sponsored by the U.S., that acknowledged surgery and anesthesia as key components to strengthening health systems.⁴ As a result, all 16 member countries of the Southern African Development Community and all 26 countries of the Pacific Community are moving ahead to strengthen surgical systems and are developing national strategic plans. In 2020, all 37 countries of the WHO Western Pacific Region unanimously adopted a framework for action for safe and affordable surgery in the region. These LMICs are determined to fill the currently unmet surgical gap of 143 million additional operations by the end of the decade, and the US has an opportunity to lead this global surgery movement.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)60160-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)60160-X/fulltext)

² <https://www.globalhealthnow.org/2020-09/prepare-pandemics-invest-surgical-care>

³ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2015/03/26/surgery-could-save-millions-of-lives-in-developing-countries>

⁴ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26239773/>

Language recognizing the importance of strengthening capacity to address neglected surgical conditions was included in the SFOP and NSRP Reports from FY2021-FY2026. We appreciate your past leadership and support, and urge you to consider the following report language for FY2027:

Neglected Surgical Conditions –

The U.S. State Department Bureau of Global Health shall provide \$4,000,000 to address Neglected Surgical Conditions and to strengthen surgical health capacity to address such health issues as maternal health related obstacles, such as lack of fistula prevention-cesarean section procedures, hernia, cleft lip, cleft palate, cataract, club foot, and untreated traumatic injuries in a public private pilot project in underserved areas in Central American countries, including in contexts without water or electricity. Strengthening surgical health systems includes the training of local surgical teams to provide safe, sustainable, and timely surgical care, and assisting ministries of health to develop and implement national surgical, obstetric, trauma, and anesthesia plans.

Including the proposed language in the FY2027 NSRP Report signifies strong commitment and investment in global surgical care. Thank you in advance for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Hallie Koch with the American College of Surgeons at hkoch@facs.org.

Sincerely,

American College of Surgeons
American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
American Academy of Ophthalmology
American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons
American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society
American Society for Surgery of the Hand Professional Organization
American Society of Anesthesiologists
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

Cc: Chair and Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations; Members of the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs

