



## **Written Testimony for the Record from the American College of Surgeons**

### **Prepared for the U.S. House Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs**

#### **Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations for the State Department Office of Global Health Security**

Chairman Diaz-Balart, Ranking Member Frankel, and members of the Subcommittee, on behalf of the more than 90,000 members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony addressing fiscal year (FY) 2026 appropriations. The ACS is a scientific and educational organization of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and improve the quality of care for all surgical patients. The ACS is dedicated to the ethical and competent practice of surgery. Its achievements have significantly influenced the course of scientific surgery in America and have established it as an important advocate for all surgical patients.

In line with ACS' dedication to global surgical access, the ACS Health Outreach Program for Equity in Global Surgery (ACS HOPE) is taking proactive steps to bridge the gaps in surgical access worldwide. Our focus extends beyond borders, emphasizing the needs of both the United States and international low-resourcing settings. With a strong emphasis on collaboration and community-based programming, we strive to improve surgical access and provide optimal surgical care to medically underserved communities. As such, ACS respectfully requests your consideration of the following as the Subcommittee works through the annual appropriations process for FY 2026:

#### **Inclusion of \$10 million for Neglected Surgical Conditions**

Each year, global deaths from conditions requiring surgical care far exceed those from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria – combined. However, the burden of conditions requiring surgical intervention continues to be neglected as a public health strategy. By directing \$10 million through the State Department, 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 gross domestic product 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.

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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. 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. 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 World Health Organization 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 U.S. has an opportunity to lead this global surgery movement.

Language recognizing the importance of strengthening capacity to address neglected surgical conditions was included in the FY 2021, FY 2022, FY2023, and FY2024 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs (SFOPS) Reports. We appreciate your past leadership and support, and urge you to consider the following report language for FY 2026:

***Neglected Surgical Conditions** – The agreement includes \$10,000,000 to strengthen surgical health capacity to address such health issues as cleft lip and cleft palate, club foot, cataracts, hernias, fistulas, and untreated traumatic injuries in underserved areas in developing 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 FY 2026 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs Report signifies a strong commitment and investment in global surgical care. Thank you for your consideration. Please contact Hallie Koch at [hkoch@facs.org](mailto:hkoch@facs.org) if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



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