



**Paul W. Abramowitz, Pharm.D., Sc.D. (Hon), FASHP**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

March 24, 2021

Vivek Murthy, M.D., M.B.A  
Surgeon General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office of the Surgeon General  
1101 Wootton Parkway  
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Dr. Murthy:

On behalf of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as United States Surgeon General. Our members were deeply appreciative of the insights around clinician well-being that you shared at our 2018 Summer Meeting. We look forward to working with you to address clinician burnout and other urgent national public health priorities, including COVID-19 and the opioid crisis.

ASHP represents pharmacists who serve as patient care providers in hospitals, health systems, ambulatory clinics, and other healthcare settings spanning the full spectrum of medication use. The organization's nearly 58,000 members include pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians. ASHP also hosts the largest gathering of pharmacists in the world, the Midyear Clinical Meeting, with over 25,000 attendees each year.

For 79 years, ASHP has been at the forefront of efforts to improve medication use and enhance patient safety, providing critical resources such as an extensive publicly-accessible COVID-19 resource center, including a scientific evidence table for COVID-19 medication therapies and a health-system pharmacy surge toolkit. Additionally, since 2001, ASHP, along with our partners at the University of Utah, has provided a comprehensive drug shortages resource center that is free to the public and widely used throughout the healthcare community.

Across the country, our members are providing essential patient care in hospitals, health systems, ambulatory clinics, and other healthcare settings spanning the full spectrum of medication use. They are on the front lines of the COVID-19 response and they have been a lifeline for patients seeking testing, immunizations, and medications. They are also the leaders managing fragile drug supply chains on behalf of patients and the healthcare enterprise. Their voices and expertise are critical to effective public health policy development and implementation.

As highly-trained clinicians, pharmacists have the ability to significantly expand patient access to needed care and contribute to addressing/improving public health. However, major barriers restrict pharmacists from fully utilizing their expertise, such as lack of direct payment for services, including those necessary to support the COVID-19 response, and the inability to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder.

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We urge you to push for a removal of the barriers to ensure that pharmacists are fully engaged in meeting public health priorities.

Again, on behalf of all our members, congratulations on your appointment as Surgeon General. ASHP would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our shared public health goals. Please consider us a resource as you work to protect and improve the health of all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Abramowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end.

Paul W. Abramowitz