

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 18, 2022

Robert Otto Valdez, Ph.D., M.H.S.  
Director  
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
Department of Health and Human Services  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. Valdez,

As members of West Virginia's Congressional Delegation, we write in strong support of Dr. Clay Marsh's nomination to the National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality (NACHRQ).

The mission of the National Advisory Council is to "provide advice and recommendations to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)'s director and the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on priorities for a national health services research agenda." Dr. Marsh would bring relevant and extensive healthcare expertise and experience to the advisory council. With more than 35 years as a physician, researcher, professor, and administrator, Dr. Marsh is familiar with the opportunities and challenges of healthcare from a variety of perspectives.

As the Chancellor and Executive Dean for Health Sciences at West Virginia University (WVU), Dr. Marsh leads a large and complex academic health sciences enterprise that serves the needs of West Virginia and the surrounding region. WVU is a land-grant university, which means the university has a mission of generating new knowledge and extending it beyond the walls of the university to serve the people of West Virginia. As HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra witnessed first-hand during his December 2021 visit to WVU Health Sciences, Dr. Marsh embodies this land-grant mission. One recent example of this is Dr. Marsh's work as West Virginia's COVID-19 czar, advising people about how to reduce their risks from COVID based on the best available health sciences research. His appearances as part of daily government briefings during the last 2½ years helped to spread useful information and reassure the public during a difficult and uncertain time. We are confident that he would bring his commitment to this vital land-grant mission to the development of a national health services research agenda.

The Federal Register Request for Nominations notice indicates the Department seeks a broad geographic representation. Dr. Marsh knows well the healthcare problems faced in the Appalachian region, which extends through parts of 13 states stretching from Mississippi to New

York and is home to 26 million people. Dr. Marsh was born, raised, educated, and has worked in West Virginia, the only state located entirely within Appalachia as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Addressing disparities in healthcare access, affordability, and quality are urgent issues throughout Appalachia. Dr. Marsh's personal and professional familiarity with Appalachia would be an important voice to the advisory council's deliberations. His serving as a member of the NACHRQ would also serve to promote the exchange of healthcare best practices and lessons learned among similar regions across the nation.

We appreciate you for noting our interest in Dr. Marsh's nomination and ensuring it receives a full and fair review. Thank you in advance for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact our offices if we may be of further assistance.

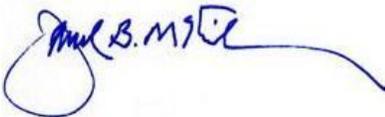
Sincerely,



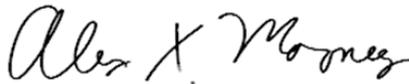
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



David B. McKinley P.E.  
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney  
Member of Congress



Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

cc: U.S. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra