

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We respectfully urge you to prioritize amputation prevention as a vital form of preventive care and to bring policies at both the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health in line with a strategy to prevent unnecessary amputations.

According to a 2008 study published in the Journal of Rehabilitation and Research, vascular diseases are related to over 80 percent of amputation-related hospital visits. Peripheral Artery Disease, (PAD) involves atherosclerosis, or the build-up of plaque inside the arteries of a patient's lower extremities and is a chronic, life-threatening condition. PAD is a risk for more than 30 million Americans living with diabetes and 84.1 million living with prediabetes. If left untreated, PAD can lead to critical limb ischemia and amputation. Today, nearly 20 million Americans have PAD and an estimated 200,000 of them – disproportionately from minority communities – suffer unnecessary amputations every year. Nationally, the amputation rate among black Medicare beneficiaries is nearly three times higher than the rate among other beneficiaries.

Federal healthcare spending should incentivize preventative screenings for high-risk individuals so that PAD can be caught and treated early, before it leads to amputation and discouraging non-traumatic amputations if anatomical testing is not performed first. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services should work with providers to establish quality measures to reduce avoidable amputations. On the research side, the National Institutes of Health should work with doctors to increase awareness of PAD and PAD symptoms, which will help them quickly and accurately diagnose this disease and begin treatments.

Thank you for your attention, and we stand ready to work with you and your administration to reduce unnecessary amputations and invest in preventive care that reduces the incidence and harm of vascular disease.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis  
Member of Congress

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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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André Carson  
Member of Congress

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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

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Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

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Jennifer González-Colón  
Member of Congress

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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress