



February 22, 2021

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

On behalf of the [Integrative Health Policy Consortium \(IHPC\)](#), we are writing to congratulate you on your recent confirmation to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

IHPC is a broad-based coalition of organizations whose mission is to eliminate barriers to health. IHPC includes 26 organizations and 12 at-large national experts representing more than 650,000 state licensed, certified and/or nationally certified healthcare professionals, including MDs, holistic nurses, chiropractic doctors, naturopathic doctors, licensed acupuncturists, licensed massage therapists, and academic, research, clinical, and public education organizations.

In recent years, the consortium has worked closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs to support an expansion of integrative health programs within the Veterans Health Administration's [Whole Health System of Care \(WHS\)](#). WHS, which began as a 3-year pilot program, delivers patient-centered care and complementary and integrative health approaches to our nation's veterans--especially those who are struggling with opioid use disorder and chronic pain. Independent [evaluations](#) of WHS have consistently demonstrated not only its ability to reduce opioid use and deliver high quality care, but also its effectiveness reducing overall medical costs. We are eager to work with your Department to expand WHS, making it an integral component of all comprehensive medical services offered to our nation's veterans.

Once again, congratulations on your confirmation. We are looking forward to working with you and wish you the best of luck in your new role.

Sincerely,

X/ *Margaret Erickson*, PhD, RN, CNS, APRN, APHN-BC

Margaret Erickson PhD, RN, CNS, APRN, APHN-BC
Co-Chair, IHPC

David Fogel M.D.
IHPC Board of Directors/Co-Chair Policy Committee
Co-founder and CEO, CHI Health Care