

December 13, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders Schumer and McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned organizations write to encourage swift passage of the *Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act* (PAHPA), legislation that is vital to improving the nations response to public health and medical emergencies, ensuring readiness against emerging threats. Our organizations know firsthand that trauma systems serve as critical infrastructure for disaster and emergency response, managing both day-to-day emergency and trauma care, but also surge capacity when needed.

Without Congressional action, the important programs that PAHPA authorizes are at risk of again expiring when the temporary extension provided in H.R. 6363, *Further Continuing Appropriations and Other Extensions Act, 2024* expires on January 19, 2024. PAHPA created the infrastructure for public health readiness; one such program that continues to play a pivotal role in advancing our capabilities to rapidly respond to emerging threats is the Military and Civilian Partnership for the Trauma Readiness (MISSION ZERO) Grant program. This bipartisan-supported grant program, which was established by *The MISSION ZERO Act* and signed into law in 2019 as part of the *Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation (PAHPAI) Act (Public Law No:116-22)*, is managed by the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

The MISSION ZERO grant program, currently authorized at \$11.5 million, covers the necessary civilian administrative costs associated with embedding military trauma professionals in civilian trauma centers. These partnerships not only enhance the trauma care capabilities of civilian facilities but also allow military trauma care teams to gain valuable exposure to treating critically injured patients. This dual-purpose initiative contributes to increased readiness for military units when deployed, thus advancing trauma care and expanding patient access. The grant program authorized by PAHPA plays a pivotal role in advancing our capabilities to rapidly respond to emerging threats, whether they be infectious diseases, bioterrorism events, or other public health emergencies. Reauthorizing the MISSION ZERO grant program will allow for continued implementation of military-civilian trauma partnerships, preserve lessons learned from the battlefield, translate those lessons to civilian care, and ensure that service members maintain their readiness to deploy in the future.

Failing to reauthorize PAHPA and adequately support these essential programs would not only hinder our nation's ability to respond effectively to public health emergencies but would also compromise the progress made in enhancing trauma care capabilities through military-civilian partnerships. The challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the importance of a robust and comprehensive public health preparedness framework. PAHPA has been instrumental in coordinating federal efforts to enhance our nation's ability to respond effectively to public health emergencies, ensuring that we are adequately prepared to protect the health and safety of our citizens. **Our organizations cannot understate the immense impact it has on our nation's preparedness and response capabilities, and we urge you to reauthorize PAHPA before it expires on January 19, 2024.**

Sincerely,

American College of Surgeons

Trauma Center Association of America

Society of Trauma Nurses

American College of Emergency Physicians

American Association of Neurological Surgeons

Congress of Neurological Surgeons

American Burn Association

American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

Emergency Nurses Association

American Trauma Society