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June 7, 2022

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The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
H-232, The Capitol
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
H-204, The Capitol
United States House of
Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), I am writing in strong opposition to H.R. 6087, the "Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act." This legislation would inappropriately expand the role of nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) by allowing them to diagnose, prescribe, treat, and certify an injury and extent of disability for purposes of compensating federal workers under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA).

The AAO-HNS is the largest organization representing otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons in the United States, with more than 10,000 practicing physician members practicing domestically. Otolaryngologist-head and neck surgeons — commonly known as ear, nose, and throat doctors or ENTs — diagnose and treat some of the most common medical disorders in patients of all ages. Our mission is to help our members provide high-quality, evidence-informed, and equitable healthcare through professional and public education, research, and health policy advocacy.

Under current law, physicians are the only providers allowed to diagnose, prescribe, treat, and certify an injury and extent of disability for purposes of compensating federal workers under FECA. These functions are reserved for physicians because physicians have the education, training, and expertise to make these complex evaluations and provide the appropriate care.

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The AAO-HNS recognizes that federal workers injured in the workplace deserve timely access to high-quality healthcare. However, this legislation threatens patient safety by effectively removing physicians from the care team and allowing NPs and PAs to independently diagnose, prescribe, and treat patients, pursuant to state scope-of-practice laws. While NPs and PAs are critical members of the care team, they do not have the same clinical training, education, and experience as physicians to make these determinations — especially for complex conditions often resulting from workplace injuries.

Our federal workforce deserves access to the highest quality of care, led by physicians, and we are particularly concerned that removing physicians from workers' compensation determinations unnecessarily jeopardizes patient safety. H.R. 6087 is a gamble with the health of our federal workers that Congress should not be willing to take. For this reason, the AAO-HNS strongly opposes passage of this legislation, and we respectfully request that you oppose it as well.

If you have any questions regarding the Academy's position on H.R. 6087, please contact Maura A. Farrell, Senior Director of Advocacy, at mfarrell@entnet.org.

Sincerely,



James C. Denny, III, MD
Executive Vice President/CEO