



November 15, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary, U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable John Kerry  
Special Presidential Envoy for  
Climate  
United States State Department  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear President Biden, Secretary Becerra, and Secretary Kerry,

On behalf of the [Steering Committee](#) of the National Academy of Medicine's (NAM) [Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the U.S. Health Sector](#), we are writing to express our support for the Administration's commitment to ensuring a low-carbon, equitable and resilient health system, as part of the nation's broader set of COP-26 climate commitments.

While transformation is necessary across all major systems, there is an immediate, actionable opportunity to mobilize the health sector around a set of common, achievable goals to invest in climate resilience and sustainability. Climate change is increasingly affecting the ability of the U.S. health care system to effectively respond to increases in extreme weather events, while also raising potential public health concerns, especially for underserved and vulnerable communities. Improving the carbon footprint of the entire health ecosystem can drastically lower the approximately 8.5% of U.S. carbon emissions for which it is responsible, while also having significant health, social, and economic benefits. Further, this work could serve as a catalyst for other sectors to improve their own carbon footprint and sustainability efforts.

The Action Collaborative is a public-private partnership of leaders from across the health system committed to addressing the sector's environmental impact while strengthening its sustainability and resilience. Members of the Action Collaborative represent hospital systems, clinicians, private payers, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, biotechnology innovators, health care services companies, health professional education, academia, nonprofits, and the federal government. Together, we seek to identify and co-develop feasible, impactful solutions in four priority areas: health care supply chain and infrastructure; health care delivery; health professional education and communication; and policy, financing and metrics.

The Action Collaborative applauds the Biden Administration's national call for health care institutions to take measurable and sustained steps to improve the health of all by addressing climate change, as the nation moves to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. We recognize the urgent need for action and are committed to reducing the health sector's carbon footprint, as it aligns around common metrics of sustainability and resiliency for the entire health system. We look forward to working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in close coordination with HHS Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, who has agreed to serve as one of our co-chairs.

Sincerely,

Victor Dzau, President, National Academy of Medicine, Co-Chair  
George Barrett, former Chairman and CEO, Cardinal Health, Inc., Co-Chair  
Andrew Witty, CEO, UnitedHealth Group, Co-Chair