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January 21, 2019

**VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION**

Alex Azar, Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW,  
Washington, D.C., 20001

Dear Secretary Azar:

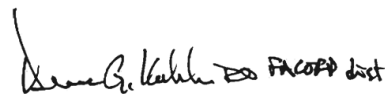
On behalf of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP), we appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) development of the 2030 Healthy People Initiative.

ACOFP is the professional organization representing more than 20,000 practicing osteopathic family physicians, residents, and students throughout the United States who are deeply committed to advancing our nation's health care system by improving health care delivery and outcomes and ensuring that patients receive high-quality care.

As an organization with many osteopathic family physicians in solo, small and rural practices, we support evidence-based objectives to improve the health of all Americans. For decades the Healthy People Initiative has identified major health issues impacting our country and set objectives to address those issues. We applaud HHS' broad focus on health care issues facing Americans while developing the 2030 Healthy People Initiative. Since the beginning of the osteopathic profession, we have approached health care delivery in the same broad, objective-based fashion. Given osteopathic physicians' foundational understanding of delivering comprehensive, evidence-based health care, we are hopeful HHS will continue addressing the overall well-being of all American patients.

Our full comments are detailed on the following page. Thank you for the opportunity to share these with you. Should you need any additional information or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact ACOFP at [advocacy@acofp.org](mailto:advocacy@acofp.org) or (847) 952-5100.

Sincerely,



Duane G. Koehler, DO, FACOFP *dist.*  
ACOFP President

ACOFP supports activities that provide science-based national objectives to improve the health of all Americans. Because our profession was founded on patient health and well-being, osteopathic family physicians are acutely aware of the importance of identifying and addressing the broad health issues that affect Americans. We appreciate that HHS has continually recognized the value of identifying major health issues and setting goals to curb their effects on patients through the Healthy People Initiative. We share the desire to ensure that all Americans can live long, healthy lives and therefore support the underlying vision of the 2030 Healthy People Initiative. Further, osteopathic family medicine is uniquely positioned to support the Healthy People Initiative's guiding principles and proposed objectives.

Osteopathic family physicians in some way address each proposed objective in a manner that aligns with the 2030 Healthy People Initiative's foundational principles. At its core, osteopathic medicine emphasizes prevention and overall well-being in health care delivery. Osteopathic family physicians work to prevent diseases that are inextricably linked to physical and mental health. This concept of health and wellness drives our practice and has healed countless patients since the beginning of the osteopathic profession. The Healthy People Initiative correctly includes hundreds of wide-ranging objectives that recognize the importance of treating the whole patient in the way that osteopathic family physicians care for their patients every day. Simply put, osteopathic family physicians have and continue to provide care to patients that advance the Healthy People Initiative's proposed objectives.

The value of primary care services, such as those provided by osteopathic family physicians, is well-documented. ACOFP has submitted numerous comments highlighting the value of such care in terms of reducing costs and improving outcomes. We reiterate those comments here and are encouraged that HHS has continued its commitment to improving health and wellness. ACOFP members share the same commitment to our patients and have done so since the beginning of our profession. As HHS continues to work on the Healthy People Initiative, ACOFP offers its support and firsthand experience of the value of primary care services in achieving these and many other objectives. We also welcome the opportunity to collaborate with HHS to ensure patient health and well-being continues to improve through sustained access to primary care physicians.