

February 23, 2022

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

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
Secretary  
Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

We write on behalf of several medical societies and patient advocacy organizations to ask for your immediate assistance to ensure that patients can continue to access life-sustaining medical devices and critical diagnostic tests during the current supply chain crisis. We believe that medical device production needs to be prioritized to protect the health of Americans who have chronic diseases and to provide urgent care for those who experience a serious adverse event or injury.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [six in 10 adults in the U.S. have a chronic disease](#) requiring ongoing medical attention or limiting activities of daily living. Some medical device manufacturers are struggling to meet the needs of these patients because of increasing difficulties in procuring a sufficient supply of semiconductor computer chips, which are essential to produce medical devices such as blood pressure monitors, glucose monitors, and respiratory care devices including CPAP machines and ventilators. These chips are also used in a variety of non-medical devices such as cell phones, tablets, and household appliances. Although medical devices require only a small fraction of the worldwide chip supply, some medical device manufacturers are having trouble securing necessary parts because of global supply constraints. A [device shortage list](#) compiled by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) includes both dialysis-related products and ventilation-related products.

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly stressed multiple facets of the health care system for patients and health care providers – ranging from increased demands on hospitals, health implications due to suspension of preventative screenings and support for chronic conditions, and the physical and mental burnout of health care staff. The pandemic also created early supply chain challenges. For patients who rely on CPAP machines for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea, the availability of their therapy has been further constrained by the June 2021 recall announced by one manufacturer, affecting 5.2 million devices worldwide. Therefore, we are turning to you for help.

We ask that you use your collective authority to prioritize medical devices in computer chip manufacturing and allocation. We also ask for the opportunity to meet with you and/or other colleagues to discuss this issue in more detail. The medical and patient communities are here to support your efforts and provide our expertise as needed. Please contact Eric Albrecht, AASM advocacy program manager, at [ealbrecht@aasm.org](mailto:ealbrecht@aasm.org) with any questions.

Given the severity of the chip shortages affecting medical devices, we urge you to act quickly in preventing the crisis of a medical device shortage during the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for giving your attention to this important issue and are grateful for your service to our country.

Sincerely,

*Raman K. Malhotra, MD, FAASM, President*  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine

*Sarah Gorman, President*  
Alliance of Sleep Apnea Partners

*David Schulman, MD, MPH, FCCP, President*  
American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST)

*Gilles Frydman, Executive Director*  
American Sleep Apnea Association

*Orly Avitzur, MD, MBA, FAAN, President*  
American Academy of Neurology