

November 16, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Leaders Schumer and Pelosi, and Members of Congress:

On behalf of the millions of people who struggle to manage complex chronic and rare diseases, their families and caregivers who rely on medical technology to save, extend and improve quality of life, the undersigned patient advocacy, disability, research, and community healthcare organizations are writing to express our deep concern about the impact of the medical device excise tax and its imminent reinstatement slated for January 1, 2018.

The uncertainty surrounding the future of this onerous tax – suspended under current law through the end of 2017 – is preventing manufacturers from maximizing investments in the research and development needed to continue to improve patient care in the U.S. and around the world, and solve tomorrow’s most complex medical problems.

From molecular diagnostics and advanced imaging systems to implantable devices like pacemakers and artificial joints, medical technologies are critical to diagnosing and treating diseases and conditions that significantly impact patients’ lives – illnesses like cancer and heart disease, and debilitating autoimmune conditions like arthritis and chronic pain.

Medical technology touches every aspect of the health care continuum. For people with cancer, diagnostic tests and imaging technologies offer vital information that guides more precise treatment, while radiotherapies and surgical oncology tools provide treatment options with fewer side effects, giving patients hope for a better quality of life. For people suffering spinal cord injury and disease, medical technology is an essential element to improving mobility and living independently. And for people with neurological conditions like epilepsy, medical technology is providing monitoring solutions that can predict and prevent seizures before they happen, a technology that would have seemed unimaginable even ten years ago.

Because of medical technology, Americans are living longer, healthier and more productive lives. Over the past three decades, rapid technological advances have helped increase life

expectancy in the U.S. by over five years. Mortality rates for major diseases have been reduced significantly: including stroke and heart disease by nearly 60 percent, and breast cancer by over a third.

But while there have been many such innovations in recent decades, tomorrow's breakthroughs promise even greater benefits to patient care. Ongoing development of advanced in vivo diagnostics, for example, will allow for more real-time and rapid analysis of blood samples, and could be a breakthrough in the management of chronic conditions. Augmented reality technologies hold huge potential in helping surgeons become more efficient, by creating 3-dimensional reconstructions of tumors. And medical 3-D printing will someday allow for organs to be created at the bedside.

We are concerned that an unintended consequence of the medical device tax will be the curtailing of investment in development of such life-changing innovations, and creation of fewer next-generation treatments and cures for individuals in need.

Americans living with medical conditions deserve better. In 2015 Congress suspended the device tax and manufacturers reinvested those funds in expanded R&D. We urge you to act now, to permanently repeal the device tax, so that individuals with life-threatening conditions will continue to benefit from the promise of advanced medical technology to extend and improve lives.

Sincerely,

AIDS Institute
America's Blood Centers
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American GI Forum of California
AMVETS - Department of California
California Association of County Veteran Service Officers
California Council of Chapters- Military Officers Association of America
COLONTOWN
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis
Jewish War Veterans of America - Department of California
Lung Cancer Alliance
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association
National Infusion Center Association
Reserve Officers Association - Department of the Golden West
Scottish American Military Association
Semi-Colon Club
U.S. Pain Foundation
United Spinal Association
Yes! Beat Liver Tumors