



April 9, 2010

Dear Maria and All MD/MBA Conference Participants:

I deeply regret that I am unable to join you for your 2010 conference. As a dual-degree holder myself, I very much would have enjoyed the opportunity to meet you face-to-face and talk about the value of what you are doing as well as the opportunities and the challenges that I see ahead of us. But you are in the hands of excellent leadership that, combined with energy and optimism of your rapidly-growing membership, will undoubtedly make the conference a rousing success.

I was well-served by the management skills and insight that I gained by combining an MBA with my medical degree. And I believe programs such as yours provide a vital perspective that help today's physicians become leaders as well as healers in the rapidly-changing world of healthcare.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we began to change the direction of health care delivery in this country with the passage of the health insurance reform bill. As we move on to the task of implementing this bill, we are going to need the assistance of stakeholders like those of you attending this conference to truly improve our health care systems.

We still have serious challenges ahead of us – including health disparities, underserved communities, and underfunding of care. All of you gathered for this conference have something important in common – and that's a passion for making a difference in the lives of those who trust in you. As a family physician, I always put the needs of my patients first. That's still my attitude today, even though I have traded my practice in a community of 2,500 people for a "satellite office" in Washington with 300 million patients. I hope you will take a similar perspective in your work, and I look forward to working with you.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina Benjamin MD".

Regina Benjamin, MD, MBA  
VADM, USPHS  
Surgeon General