Statement Prepared by the G4 Alliance for Eric Hargan, HHS Acting Secretary & Commissioner, High-Level Commission on NCDs

Roundtable Discussion on NCDs Hosted by the Office of Global Affairs
HHS Humphrey Building, Room 705A, 200 Independence Ave, SW, Washington, DC 20201
January 18, 2017, 1-2 PM

We would like to thank the US government for the opportunity to participate in a roundtable discussion on the issues surrounding NCDs. On behalf of the Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma, and Anaesthesia Care (The G4 Alliance, www.theg4alliance.org), a network of more than 90 global organizations working to increase access to safe, timely and affordable surgical and anaesthesia care for the nearly 5 billion people around the world in need, we would like to present the following statement for your consideration in advance of the roundtable discussion.

NCDs contribute to more than 15 million deaths each year, particularly in low- and lower-middle income countries (LMICs) where populations are particularly vulnerable to premature NCD-related mortality. Safe surgical care represents an essential pillar to manage and treat noncommunicable conditions, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and trauma.

As the data demonstrates, NCDs are most likely to impact people in their most productive years and contribute to social and economic costs. Surgical care is an essential treatment and management strategy over the life-course, especially of those burdened with NCDs. However, more than 70% of the world does not have access to essential surgical and anaesthesia care. The world’s poorest third has access to only 6% of all surgical procedures performed globally. As a result of this inequity, nearly 17 million people die each year due to a lack of essential surgical services, while millions more suffer preventable disability and associated co-morbidities.

Surgical care is cost-effective and cross-cutting health service that is necessary to address a broad range of conditions and disease categories including maternal and child health, trauma, and other noncommunicable conditions. Without investment in surgical care, including strengthening the surgical workforce, millions will continue to suffer needless deaths, disabilities and related financial catastrophe.

Key Statistics:
- Surgically-treatable conditions represent one-third of the global burden of disease.
- Improvements in trauma care can save up to 2 million lives in LMICs.
- Surgery is responsible for roughly 65% of all cancer cure and control.
- 25% of disabilities and injuries could be treated through surgical intervention.
- As many as 81 million people face catastrophic financial expenditure each year in attempting to seek access to emergency and essential surgical care.
- Investing in surgical systems strengthening in LMICs contributes a 10-fold return for every dollar invested.
- Without investment in surgical care, LMICs face an est. USD $12.3 trillion in lost GDP by 2030.

We thank the US Government for its leadership in recognizing the integral role of surgical care as part of health systems strengthening. We acknowledge its support for World Health Assembly Resolution 68.15, which recognized the importance of strengthening emergency and essential surgical and anaesthesia care as part of universal health coverage. As Commissioner to the High-Level Commission on NCDs, we encourage Acting Secretary of HHS Eric Hargan to advocate for the essential role of surgical care as a critical strategy for the treatment and management of NCDs across the life-course, and as a cost-effective strategy for building strong and robust health systems around the world. Leadership in global health not only improves the lives of people living in LMICs, but also has an important spillover effect in improving global security, fostering economic growth and supporting sustainable development. On behalf of the G4 Alliance and our network, we thank you for your attention and consideration.

3 Meara et al (2015)
4 Meara et al (2015)