



## The Society of Thoracic Surgeons

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December 7, 2015

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis  
2112 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

### **RE: Funding for Congenital Heart Disease Research**

Dear Congressman Bilirakis:

On behalf of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS), I write to express appreciation for your support of congenital heart disease (CHD) research by introducing the Congenital Heart Futures Reauthorization Act of 2015 (H.R. 3952). Founded in 1964, STS is an international not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,000 cardiothoracic surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals in 90 countries who are dedicated to ensuring the best surgical care for patients with diseases of the heart, lungs, and other organs in the chest. The mission of the Society is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.

STS commends you for seeking to extend the funding of congenital heart disease-related public health research. Continued federal appropriations in support of these efforts at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can improve our understanding of the epidemiology of CHD and enhance patient care. As you know, there is no cure for CHD, and it is the most common congenital anomaly impacting approximately 40,000 infants in the United States each year.<sup>1</sup> Your legislation will provide researchers the opportunity to study CHD and improve the lives of individuals born with these conditions.

STS remains fully committed to improving the quality, safety, and efficiency of care for all patients with congenital heart disease. We look forward to working with you to ensure funds for congenital heart research remain accessible so that physicians can promote treatments that improve patient outcomes, and patients diagnosed with CHD can benefit from an enhanced awareness of their conditions and treatments. If you have any questions, please contact STS Director of Government Relations, Courtney Yohe (202/787-1222 or [cyohe@sts.org](mailto:cyohe@sts.org)).

Sincerely,

Mark S. Allen, MD  
President

<sup>1</sup> Congenital Heart Defects: Data & Statistics. (2015, July 31). Retrieved November 25, 2015, from <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/heartdefects/data.html>