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January 27, 2022

Awards Committee  
Maricopa County Medical Society  
326 E Coronado Rd, Suite 101  
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to nominate Dr. Rebecca Sunenshine for the MCMS Individual Distinguished Service Award. I can think of no individual physician who has done as much for the health of the public in Arizona during the trying times of this pandemic.

There is of course no shortage of examples of exceptional sacrifice on the part of physicians during these dreadful times. In order to fulfill their oaths, many, many physicians have placed at risk their own physical and mental health, that of their families, and a few may have even sacrificed their lives. There are perhaps more worthy recipients of this award in the past two years than in the rest of MCMS history. I do not envy your decision this time around.

Dr. Sunenshine stands out for her leadership, courage, and savvy in balancing impossible choices amidst unforgiving (and often unforgivable) political constraints. Dr. Sunenshine is the long-time Medical Director for the Division of Disease Control at the Maricopa County Department of Public Health. As such, she was the point person for the public health response to the pandemic for our entire community, which is the third most-populous local public health jurisdiction in the United States.

Dr. Sunenshine oversaw the rapid expansion of the department's disease control efforts from a baseline of decades of political and funding neglect. She achieved a widely praised system for practical contact tracing despite intense political pressure to proceed in a less productive direction. She oversaw an efficient and balanced distribution of scarce supplies during periods of hotly competitive demands. Despite rapidly changing information, she produced and made readily available the best possible guidance to every part of the community. She was a frequent spokesperson to the media, always adhering to factual and practical information despite intense and personal political pressure. In the face of overtly harmful policies from elected officials, she maintained the integrity of the public health system, never surrendering facts yet maximizing potential benefit rather than sacrifice what was possible by fighting unwinnable battles.

Despite incredible pressures, she made the best of an awful situation, making it possible for the rest of us to do as good a job as we could with all aspects of the pandemic. There were many physicians on the

front line of this pandemic. Whether we know it or not, everything we were able to do was facilitated by the often behind-the-scenes efforts of Dr. Sunenshine and the team she led.

I am proud to nominate Dr. Rebecca Sunenshine, and proud to consider her a colleague.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob England". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob England, MD, MPH