



SOCIETY FOR THE ARTS IN HEALTHCARE®

Dedicated to advancing the arts as integral to healthcare

April 13, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

Thank you for the increased funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. Recognizing the economic pressures on our country; however, it is critical to continue the momentum and support the arts, especially as they relate to healthcare.

Almost every American will experience a health issue that needs to be addressed by our healthcare system sometime during his or her lifetime. The effects of the arts used as an integral part of healthcare are profound, significantly affecting patient care and cost savings and creating safer and healthier environments. In our 2004 and 2007 landmark studies of over 2,000 healthcare institutions, almost half reported using arts programming to create healing environments; support patients' physical, mental, and emotional recovery; communicate health information; reduce healthcare costs; and foster positive working conditions.

On behalf of the Society for the Arts in Healthcare, a National Co-sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2010, I urge you to support arts and health through the following measures:

- Requesting that the **Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a study** to assess the current status of federal support of creative arts in healthcare programs to improve the quality of healthcare services.
- Addressing, through **research funding and regulatory support**, increased access to creative arts in healthcare programs addressing older Americans, as well as those with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, autism, and other conditions, through federal health programs.
- Ensuring that **national health benefit exchange provisions** as outlined in healthcare reform proposals include individual artists and cultural non-profit organizations currently excluded from employer-based insurance plans;
- Increasing **funding to the National Endowment for the Arts** to \$180 million for the creation, preservation, and presentation of the arts in America, including arts in healthcare.
- Enacting legislation to renew tax code provisions that expired on December 31, 2009, including the **IRA Charitable Rollover provision**, allowing individuals to roll funds from Individual Retirement Accounts to charity without first treating them as taxable income—which will contribute to the well-being of arts in healthcare programming and other non-profit efforts that serve the public.

Founded in 1991, the **Society for the Arts in Healthcare** is a Washington, DC-based non-profit membership organization dedicated to advancing the arts as integral to healthcare. Funded in part by the National Endowment of the Arts and Johnson & Johnson, the Society provides program and professional development support through resources and information, consulting services, and the convening of conferences and symposia to a wide range of arts and healthcare institutions. With over 1,700 members in 49 states, our membership represents diverse constituencies: healthcare-decision makers, doctors, nurses, architects, interior designers, researchers, and artists.

Thank you for your leadership and support of the growth of arts in healthcare in our country.

Sincerely,

Anita B. Boles
Executive Director