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September 24, 2015

His Excellency José R. Cabañas Rodríguez
Ambassador
Embassy of Cuba
2630 16th St NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Ambassador Rodríguez,

I write to you on behalf of the International Children's Heart Foundation (ICHF) in support of its efforts to conduct surgeries in Cuba in partnership with Cuban surgeons and doctors, and provide education programs for Cuban nurses. Cuba has a long and impressive history of engaging in medical diplomacy around the world and as our two countries work to strengthen our newly normalized relations, I believe such cooperation would be beneficial not only for our relationship but also for the advancement of medical delivery in both of our countries. To help facilitate this partnership, I respectfully request that you contact Dr. Roberto Morales Ojeda, Minister of Public Health, encouraging him to send an official written invitation to ICHF to conduct surgeries and education programs in Cuba with Cuban medical professionals.

The ICHF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) located in my hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, and has provided pediatric cardiac services, education and program development in more than 30 countries over the past two decades. In performing its work, ICHF believes in providing programs and education based on the needs expressed by the local community, which allows it to tailor programs to the direct medical needs of the Cuban people. In addition to its focused medical and education programs, the ICHF can provide equipment that would aid in local bioengineering as well as technical assistance to upgrade existing equipment.

As a Member of the U.S. Congress, I have long supported normalizing relations with Cuba. Likewise, I am a great supporter of access to medical care and understand that through medical diplomacy, nations can build healthy relationships that save lives. Memphis is home to many world-renowned medical institutions that have contributed to global medical research and surgical innovations, including St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, which are leading pediatric research and treatment facilities for children living with life-threatening diseases. The ICHF hopes to develop a team consisting of their surgeons to work in tandem with Cuban surgeons as part of its work in Cuba. In addition to the knowledge that would be shared on pediatric health, your country's extensive research into diabetes and

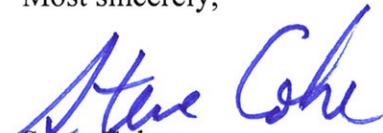
related limb-saving medications are other areas where our two homes could find meaningful partnerships as Memphis doctors are working to curb the rate of diabetes and its complications among Memphians.

I recently traveled to Cuba for the reopening of the U.S. Embassy and visited your country in 2011. During each visit, I found Cuba to be a beautiful country that is rich with culture and people who share pastimes similar to Americans. I know that baseball is one of Cuba's most popular sports. In the United States, it is considered "America's favorite pastime." My childhood hero, who became my lifelong friend, was the great Cuban baseball player Minnie Miñoso. I am reminded that sports, too, can play a role in diplomacy.

As time goes on, it is my vision that Memphis and Cuba will develop a lasting relationship through medical diplomacy and other areas of shared interest. I encourage efforts to strengthen diplomacy and relationships that foster goodwill among leaders and the people. It is in this spirit that I hope you will write to Minister Morales Ojeda urging him to invite the International Children's Heart Foundation to partner with Cuban surgeons in Cuba and provide education programs for Cuban nurses.

As always I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress