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To the AI/ Machine Learning Demonstration Pilot Project 2025 Selection Committee:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the HEAD-GAIN project, which aims to expedite and improve care for headache patients referred to the UCSF Neurology and beyond. The current referral-based system often leads to delayed care for those with potentially serious secondary headaches, while simultaneously creating lengthy wait times for all patients. HEAD-GAIN offers an innovative solution to this clinical challenge.

The project's approach—using an expert-curated pre-visit patient questionnaire analyzed by large language model technology—represents a thoughtful application of artificial intelligence in healthcare that can significantly enhance clinical decision-making for the non-specialist. By identifying patients at risk for secondary headaches who require expedited evaluation early in the referral process, and simultaneously providing evidence-based treatment recommendations for those with primary headaches, HEAD-GAIN has the potential to:
- Reduce wait times for patients with secondary headache
- Improve overall patient outcomes through earlier intervention
- Decrease the burden on specialist services through more efficient triage
- Standardize care according to best practices and clinical guidelines

The validation of such a tool would represent a significant advancement in care for patients with headache and could potentially be applied to other neurological and non-neurological conditions where early differentiation of urgent and less urgent diagnoses can lead to widespread benefits. Once validated, this tool could be utilized more widely by first-line care providers such as primary care and emergency care clinicians.

I believe this project has tremendous potential to improve patient care, optimize clinical workflows, and serve as a model for similar approaches in other medical specialties. As the General Neurology Division Chief, I am motivated to ensure the success of this clinical tool and have already engaged with primary care partners and neurologists in other divisions working on similar projects. I fully support the HEAD-GAIN project and look forward to the positive impact it will have on headache management and patient outcomes.

Sincerely,

Maggie Waung MD, PhD
General Neurology Division Chief
Jan and Maria Manetti Shrem Endowed Professorship