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November 17, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, Education
and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Members Cole and Murray:

On behalf of the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) and its 40,000 members, I write to respectfully urge you to continue the investment in our nation's health by continuing to fund critical dental workforce and oral health-related programs.

We appreciate that both the House and Senate FY2021 Labor-HHS proposals included provisions on HRSA's Oral Health Training Programs and the Chief Dental Office positions (CDO) at HRSA and the CMS.

Oral Health Literacy – The AGD asks the Subcommittees to include report language providing funding from Program Management for the continued development of an oral health awareness and education campaign across relevant HRSA divisions. The FY2020 appropriations for HRSA provided \$300,000 from Program Management for HRSA to continue the development of an oral health literacy campaign.

The House FY2021 Labor-HHS appropriations bill report ([H. Rept. 116-450](#)) included \$300,000 from Program Management to continue this program. The Senate FY2021 Labor-HHS appropriations proposed [explanatory statement](#) does not have explicit language on HRSA's Oral Health Literacy activities under Program Management. However, it would increase the overall Program Management funding recommendation by \$2,000,000 over the FY2020 level. Specific report language on Oral Health Literacy is essential to ensure that HSRA's oral health literacy efforts will continue.

The importance of oral disease prevention in the form of oral health literacy is often overlooked, much to the detriment of our nation's oral health needs. The vast majority of oral health ailments can be avoided by increasing oral health literacy and awareness. This is especially important within the vulnerable populations HRSA seeks to serve through this program that Congress has directed it to develop.

AGD thanks the Subcommittees for their consideration and encourages you to contact Daniel J. Buksa, J.D., Associate Executive Director, Public Affairs, by phone at (312) 440-4328 or via email at Daniel.buksa@agd.org should you have any questions concerning our requests or if you would like to meet to discuss these critical programs.

Thank you again for your ongoing support of and commitment to improving oral health for all Americans.

Attached is the proposed report language for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bruce Cassis, D.D.S., MAGD
President
Academy of General Dentistry



Myron (Mike) Bromberg, D.D.S.
Congressional Liaison
Academy of General Dentistry

Proposed Language:

- **HRSA – Program Management**
Oral Health Literacy. The Committee includes \$500,000 to continue the development of an oral health awareness and education campaign across relevant HRSA divisions, including the Health Centers Program, Oral Health Workforce, Maternal and Child Health, Ryan White HIV/ AIDS Program, and Rural Health. The Committee directs HRSA to identify oral health literacy strategies that are evidence-based and focused on oral healthcare prevention and education, including prevention of oral disease such as early childhood and other caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancer. The conferees expect the Chief Dental Officer to play a key role in the design, monitoring, oversight, and implementation of this project.