



American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

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President

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The Honorable Raul Ruiz, MD
US House of Representatives
1319 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Ruiz:

On behalf of the 9,000 fellows and members of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), I thank you for introducing the "Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act" (HR 2574), which, if passed, will allow students in certain healthcare fields, including dental students, the opportunity to apply for federally-funded grants to offset the costs of tuition and living expenses for their graduate-level education. AAOMS believes this bill will encourage students to consider careers in oral and maxillofacial surgery, as well as provide under-served communities with dental care services that might not have been previously accessible.

As a physician, you are likely aware that the cost of graduate-level medical and dental education is substantial for the vast majority of students. Oral and maxillofacial surgeons (OMSs) have an average student debt of \$314,000, with ranges between \$100,000 and \$620,000. These steep schooling costs can serve as a deterrent to those wishing to enter dental school, as well as leave students with crippling amounts of debt once completing their education and residency that ultimately impact their decision on where to practice.

We support efforts that encourage OMSs to practice in underserved areas out of residency. Dental care is often overlooked as a necessary form of healthcare, which leaves many people vulnerable to preventable diseases and conditions. We appreciate that the language in this bill does not restrict the grants to those in primary medicine and dentistry like so many current federal programs do. We believe it is important to provide underserved areas with the full-scope of dental care, which includes dental specialties.

Passage of the "Building a Health Care Workforce for the Future Act" is important in aiding students with the tremendous costs associated with graduate-level dental education, as well as increasing the availability of oral and maxillofacial surgery services to those in underserved areas. Please contact Ms. Jeanne Tuerk of the AAOMS Governmental Affairs Department at 847-678-6200 or jtuerk@aaoms.org if we can be of any assistance as you move HR 1606 through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Douglas W. Fain, D.D.S., M.D., F.A.C.S.
President