



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

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Chairman  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Labor, Health and Human Services  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

September 21, 2016

Dear Chairmen Blunt and Cole and Ranking Members Murray and DeLauro:

The undersigned organizations as supporters of Friends of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR) are deeply grateful to the subcommittees for calling attention to the importance of biomedical research by proposing increased funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). We strongly urge Congress to approve an omnibus appropriation bill for fiscal year 2017 that provides the Senate Appropriations Committee approved allocation of **\$430.5 million** for NIDCR. Building upon the success of last year, increasing funding for NIDCR is a critical step to improving the oral health of the nation, reducing the societal costs of dental care and enhancing the evidence base for our profession.

FNIDCR is a unified voice promoting the mission and research of NIDCR. A broad-based coalition representing the interests of patients, researchers, educators, clinicians and students, we are pleased to support the extraordinary work of NIDCR.

NIDCR is the largest institution in the world dedicated exclusively to research to improve dental, oral and craniofacial health. The health of the mouth and surrounding craniofacial (skull and face) structures is central to a person's overall health and well-being. Left untreated, oral diseases and poor oral conditions make it difficult to eat, drink, swallow, smile, communicate and maintain proper nutrition. Scientists also have discovered important linkages between periodontal (gum) disease and heart disease, stroke, diabetes and pancreatic cancer.

Investments in NIDCR-funded research during the past half century have led to improvements in oral health for millions of Americans through its impact on areas such as community water fluoridation; the implementation of dental sealants to reduce cavities in children; and emerging opportunities to assess the efficacy of a human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine for oral and pharyngeal cancers.

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As a result of these investments, today over 200 million Americans are benefiting from community water fluoridation. The percent of children from 1960-2000 in the US without any dental decay in their permanent teeth has almost tripled from about 25 percent to 70 percent. Absent advances in oral health research in the fight against dental caries (tooth decay) and periodontal diseases there would be an additional 18.6 million Americans aged 45 or older who have lost all of their natural teeth. Perhaps most striking is that since the 1950s the total federal investment in NIH-funded oral health research has saved the American public at least \$3 for every \$1 invested.

From a patient perspective, the research at NIDCR has impacted millions of patients with a wide range of conditions that impede quality of life, are physically debilitating, and create a major financial and social burden. Many complex systemic diseases, ranging from TMJ to autoimmune disorders, such as Behcet's, to ectodermal dysplasias, have a major oral component. Through research into the basic science that is clearly needed to better understand these diseases; through the discovery of biomarkers for better diagnosis and clinical care; and by the development of new and improved tools for management and treatment, NIDCR has provided hope for these patients and their families that their lives will one day be improved substantially.

Despite these improvements, however, treating oral health conditions remains extremely costly—with the nation spending \$113.5 billion on dental services in 2014. While tooth decay and gum disease are the most prevalent threats to oral health, complete tooth loss, oral cancer and craniofacial congenital anomalies, such as cleft lip and palate, impose massive health and economic burdens on Americans.

This is why it is our hope in the upcoming months that Congress will come together to approve an omnibus appropriations bill that provides **\$430.5 million** for NIDCR. Putting appropriations on autopilot via a long term continuing resolution beyond December 9<sup>th</sup> will slow down progress to finding cures for many diseases that plague our nation. We look forward to working with you to ensure the highest funding level possible for NIDCR is enacted into law this year and we greatly appreciate your leadership thus far to help make this a reality.

Sincerely,  
Academy of General Dentistry  
Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American Academy of Periodontology  
American Association of Endodontists  
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons  
American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
American Behcet's Disease Association (ABDA)  
American Chronic Pain Association  
American College of Prosthodontists  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Education Association

American Student Dental Association  
FACES: The National Craniofacial Association  
Fibrous Dysplasia Foundation  
Greater Tampa Bay Oral Health Coalition  
Harvard School of Dental Medicine  
Hispanic Dental Association  
International Foundation for Autoimmune Arthritis  
Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine  
Loma Linda University School of Dentistry  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association  
Moebius Syndrome Foundation  
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias  
Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine  
Oral Health America  
Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, School of Dental Medicine  
Scleroderma Foundation  
Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation  
SPOHNC (Support For People With Oral And Head And Neck Cancer)  
The Ohio State University, College of Dentistry  
The Oral Cancer Foundation  
The TMJ Association  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
UAB School of Dentistry  
UCLA School of Dentistry  
UMKC School of Dentistry  
University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Dentistry  
University of Iowa College of Dentistry  
University of Michigan School of Dentistry  
University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston  
University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry  
University of Utah School of Dentistry