

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

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

March 8, 2016

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the members of the Organized Dentistry Coalition, we are writing to respectfully request the inclusion of report language in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill for FY 2017 funding that would re-establish the Chief Dental Officer position at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

HRSA provides over \$50 million to fund oral health programs each year and currently does not have a Chief Dental Officer with executive level authority and resources to oversee the programs and initiatives. We believe it is essential that an individual hold such a position within an agency that provides funding for oral health programs across the country that seek to improve access to oral health services for underserved individuals.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies directed HRSA to establish a chief dental officer in 2008. Dr. Jay Anderson was selected for the position but after he retired in 2010, the position has technically remained vacant. Currently, HRSA has a Senior Dental Advisor but the position does not have executive authority nor direct access to HRSA officials who make decisions about oral health programs.

We believe that it is necessary for the Committee to include following report language to address the situation:

**Report Language request:
HRSA – Chief Dental Officer**

The Committee is disturbed to learn that despite its directive in report 110-231, to establish a Chief Dental Officer (CDO) position, HRSA has not maintained the appointment. The Committee understands that since the beginning of 2012 the position has been downgraded to Senior Dental Advisor and moved several layers below HRSA leadership and decision makers. This has occurred in spite of the Administration's commitment in 2010 to establish the Oral Health Initiative which highlighted several HRSA initiatives to improve access to oral health care, especially for needy populations. The Committee directs HRSA to restore the position of HRSA Chief Dental Officer with executive level authority and resources to oversee and lead HRSA dental programs and initiatives. The CDO is also expected to serve as the agency representative on oral health issues to international, national, state, and/or local government agencies, universities, oral health stakeholder organizations, etc.

We appreciate the work the committee has done to preserve funding for oral health programs. Should there be any questions please contact Ms. Janice E. Kupiec with the American Dental Association, kupiecj@ada.org, or Mr. C. Scott Litch with the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, slitch@aapd.org.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association
Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Periodontology
American Association for Dental Research

American Association of Endodontists
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthodontists
American College of Prosthodontists
Association of Women Dentists