

September 6, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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 Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt, and Ranking Member Murray:

The undersigned organizations, as supporters of the Friends of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR), respectfully request that as you and your colleagues finalize appropriations legislation for fiscal year (FY) 2019 that you fund the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) at a level equal to or higher than the Senate marks of **\$39.1 billion** and **\$462.024 million**, respectively.

NIH is a driver of science and innovation, and the myriad research initiatives, programs and networks it supports are among the most important and valuable investments made on behalf of the American people. The third Institute to be established at NIH, NIDCR is the largest institution in the world dedicated exclusively to research to improve dental, oral and craniofacial (skull and face) health. Oral health research discoveries, such as fluoride in water and dental sealants, have already led to a precipitous drop in tooth decay among children and resulted in more Americans keeping more of their teeth for longer.¹ Since the 1950s, estimates reveal that the **total federal investment in NIH-funded oral health research has saved the American public at least \$3 for every \$1 invested.**²

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4212322/>

² <https://report.nih.gov/NIHfactsheets/ViewFactSheet.aspx?csid=129>

Yet, even with the NIDCR's many contributions to citizens' oral and overall health, oral diseases and conditions remain a prevalent and costly part of our society, and troubling disparities still persist. For example, dental caries, though largely preventable, remain the most common chronic condition of children (aged 6 to 11) and adolescents (aged 12 to 19), and oral disorders are the seventh greatest health expenditure among U.S. adults. Furthermore, Hispanic and non-Hispanic black children are more likely to have untreated dental caries.³ At a macro level, in 2017 the United States spent more than \$129 billion on dental and oral health care and recent projections suggest that annual U.S. spending on dental care will reach \$192 billion by 2026.⁴

Right now, NIDCR-funded researchers are contributing to the knowledge base surrounding some of our nation's most pressing public health issues, including opioid abuse and chronic pain, by researching prescription drug decision-making and pain biology and management. The Institute has also made strategic investments in regenerative medicine to replace bone and oral tissues lost or damaged by cancer and other diseases or trauma, as well as investments aimed at eliminating oral health disparities by supporting projects that investigate their social, behavioral and genetic underpinnings.

NIH and NIDCR play a critical role in improving our nation's oral and overall health. We greatly appreciate your leadership thus far to ensure the highest possible funding at NIH, and we urge you to continue making funding for this research a priority in final spending legislation.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Lindsey Horan at lhoran@aadr.org.

Sincerely,

A.T. Still University - Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health
A.T. Still University - Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health
Academy of Dentistry International
Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation
American Association for Dental Research
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Behcet's Disease Association
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
College of Dental Medicine - Columbia University
Eastman Institute for Oral Health
FACES: The National Craniofacial Association
Fibrous Dysplasia Foundation

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6609a5.htm>

⁴ Cuckler, G., Sisko, A., et al. "National Health Expenditure Projections, 2017-26: Despite Uncertainty, Fundamentals Primarily Drive Spending Growth," February 2018, Health Affairs: <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.1655>

Harvard School of Dental Medicine
IFAA - International Foundation for Autoimmune & Autoinflammatory Arthritis
International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association
Moebius Syndrome Foundation
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias
New York University College of Dentistry
Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation
Scleroderma Foundation
Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation
SPOHNC (Support For People With 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 Michigan School of Dentistry
UCLA School of Dentistry
UMMC School of Dentistry
University at Buffalo, School of Dental Medicine
University of Florida College of Dentistry
University of Iowa College of Dentistry and Dental Clinics
University of Mississippi School of Dentistry
University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston
University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry
Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine