

July 18, 2023

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair McMorris Rodgers and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of our collective dental professional organizations, we are writing to urge you to support H.R. 3843, which would reauthorize the Action for Dental Health (ADH) program for a five-year period, from 2024 to 2028. ADH directs crucial federal funding to state and local organizations through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) oral health workforce grant program.

A recent survey of dentists from the American Dental Association (ADA) demonstrated the acuteness of oral health workforce issues, as one-third of dentists are actively recruiting dental hygienists and dental assistants, and 87% of dentists told the ADA that recruiting for these positions is extremely challenging. These challenges came despite new incentives offered to prospective dental team members. Dental practice staffing difficulties limit the number of patients dentists can see, thus posing an obstacle to access to dental care. These closely linked problems of workforce deficiencies and difficulty accessing dental care are magnified in the underserved areas that are the focus of ADH programs.

America's dental professionals have long championed the ADH program, which provides federal grants for the dental health needs of underserved populations. ADH funding is directed towards dental disease prevention through oral health workforce training, improved oral health education, reduction of geographic and language barriers, and improved access to care, among other initiatives. Programs supported by ADH advance the important goal of decreasing dental health disparities in communities where better access to care is most needed.

Please consider helping Americans in underserved areas improve their oral health by supporting H.R. 3843 to reauthorize the Action for Dental Health Act (P.L. 115-302) oral health workforce grants for innovative programs for a five-year period, from fiscal year 2024 through fiscal year 2028.

The nation's dental professionals stand ready to work with you to ensure Americans have a sufficient dental workforce to meet their oral health needs. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Natalie Hales at 202-898-2404 or Halesn@ada.org.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association
Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Periodontology
American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research
American Association of Endodontists
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthodontists
American Dental Education Association
American Student Dental Association
Association of Dental Support Organizations
Hispanic Dental Association