

March 5, 2020

The Honorable Alex M. Azar, II
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Chief Dental Officer

Dear Secretary Azar:

On behalf of the 163,000 members of the American Dental Association (ADA), we are writing to you today to thank you for your February 13 announcement at the Senate Finance Committee hearing, "*The President's Fiscal Year 2021 Budget*," of a chief dental officer (CDO) being brought onboard at the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). This announcement is most welcome news to the dental community and we are also grateful to hear of your passion for oral health and its importance to overall health.

We also seek clarification on whether this position will be a shared position with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). We are concerned that having one person in both roles will diminish the ability of the CMS CDO to fully oversee oral health within the agency. As you know, the Chief Dental Officer at CMS is charged with providing oral health expertise and support for Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Together these three programs provide health care to millions of Americans, including children, pregnant women, and older Americans. While oral health in the United States has improved overall in the past several decades, there is still much work to do, and we hope the next Chief Dental Officer will work to build upon the progress that has been made. We also seek clarification on timing of this new appointment and when an official announcement on who has been appointed will take place.

We look forward to continuing to work with CMS and we would welcome the opportunity to speak with you in more detail and answer any questions you have regarding these comments. Please contact Mr. David Linn at the ADA at (202) 789-5170 and linnd@ada.org to facilitate further discussion.

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Sincerely,

Chad P. Gehani, D.D.S.
President

Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director

cc: Seema Verma, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

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