

June 8, 2023

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chair, Health Subcommittee  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Ranking Member, Health Subcommittee  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
2232 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Guthrie and Ranking Member Eshoo:

On behalf of the over 159,000 members of the American Dental Association (ADA), we are writing to share our support of H.R. 3843, which would reauthorize the Action for Dental Health (ADH) program, a crucial workforce grant program focused on providing access to care for those most in need. We would also like to thank the Energy and Commerce Committee for its attention to dental and other health workforce issues.

These issues are among the ADA's top priorities and are closely linked because one-third of dentists have told the ADA that they are actively recruiting dental hygienists and dental assistants, and 87% of dentists tell the ADA that recruiting for these positions is extremely challenging despite incentives offered to prospective dental team members. Dental practice staffing difficulties limit the number of patients dentists can see, and this problem is especially acute in underserved areas.

The ADA has 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 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.

The ADA is asking the Committee to advance H.R. 3843 to reauthorize the Action for Dental Health Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-302) grants for innovative programs for a five-year period, from fiscal year 2024 through fiscal year 2028. In order to ensure program accountability and transparency, the ADA also asks that Congress require the Secretary of Health & Human Services (HHS) to submit a report to Congress on the extent to which the grants increased access to dental services in designated dental health professional shortage areas.

Once again, we thank you for your attention to dental workforce issues and to ADH. The nation's dentists 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](mailto:Halesn@ada.org).

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Sincerely,

George R. Shepley, D.D.S.  
President

Raymond A. Cohlma, D.D.S.  
Executive Director

GRS:RAC:nh