

April 13, 2009

Dear Senator:

We the undersigned are urging you to sponsor the **Dental Emergency Responder Act**. This legislation would incorporate dentistry by name into the Federal disaster response framework. It calls for no new federal money and poses no new restrictions on monies now being spent.

Dentists and allied dental personnel are willing to support the medical and public health response to disasters and, with minimal additional training, could readily fit into an all-hazards emergency health care paradigm. Dentists receive a sound general medical background during their professional education. Most dental facilities can also be used as outpatient surgery centers and pharmaceutical storage and distribution sites for overwhelmed hospital facilities.

Unfortunately, many public disaster response policies, plans, and programs have yet to identify a role for dentists beyond victim identification and administrative support. In some cases, dentists have not been allowed to take patient medical histories despite their qualifications. Moreover, dental schools have at times been denied Federal public health and medical response training funds on the grounds that dentists are not identified by name in the Federal definitions of "public health worker" and "emergency response provider."

The Dental Emergency Responder Act will—

- Incorporate dentists and allied dental personnel by name into the federal definitions of 'public health worker' and 'emergency response provider';
- Incorporate dental assets by name into the National Health Security Strategy and the operational plan for the National Incident Management System;
- Clarify that dental schools are eligible to apply for public health and medical response training grants under the federal Centers for Public Health Preparedness program; and
- Encourage the Department of Homeland Security's Chief Medical Officer to engage the dental community when addressing medical and public health preparedness issues.

Our nation's medical surge capacity will never be optimal until we capitalize on the personnel and resources of the *entire* health care workforce. We urge you to support this bill, which would give the dental community the leverage it needs to advocate for a more substantive role in the Federal disaster response framework. Should you have any questions or wish to arrange for a meeting, please contact Ms. Jennifer Fisher at 202-789-5160 or [fisherj@ada.org](mailto:fisherj@ada.org).

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry  
Alliance of the American Dental Association  
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry  
American Academy of Periodontology  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association of Dental Consultants

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American Association of Dental Examiners  
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons  
American Association of Orthodontists  
American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Education Association  
American Student Dental Association  
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors

Alabama Dental Association  
Alaska Dental Society  
Arizona Dental Association  
Arkansas Academy of General Dentistry  
Arkansas State Dental Association  
California Dental Association  
Colorado Dental Association  
Connecticut State Dental Association  
Delaware State Dental Society  
Florida Dental Association  
Georgia Dental Association  
Hawaii Dental Association  
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Michigan Dental Association  
Mississippi Dental Association  
Missouri Dental Association

Montana Dental Association  
Nebraska Dental Association  
Nevada Dental Association  
New Hampshire Dental Society  
New Mexico Dental Association  
New York Society of Forensic Dentistry  
New York State Dental Association  
North Carolina Dental Society  
North Dakota Dental Association  
Ohio Dental Association  
Oklahoma Dental Association  
Oregon Dental Association  
Pennsylvania Dental Association  
Rhode Island Dental Association  
South Carolina Dental Association  
South Dakota Dental Association  
Tennessee Dental Association  
Texas Dental Association  
Utah Dental Association  
Vermont State Dental Society  
Virginia Dental Association  
Washington State Dental Association  
West Virginia Dental Association  
Wisconsin Dental Association  
Wyoming Dental Association