

June 21, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of our 162,000 dentist members, the American Dental Association (ADA) would like to thank you for sponsoring S. 1958, the Doctors of Community Act (DOC Act). The ADA strongly supports efforts to increase the dental workforce, especially in underserved communities and populations, through support for new and expanded dental residency programs.

As you know, the DOC Act would permanently extend and expand the Teaching Health Center Graduate Medical Education (THCGME) program, which trains residents on serving some of our country's most vulnerable populations in community-based settings such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Rural Health Clinics, and tribal health centers. Permanent, dedicated funding would provide stability to teaching health centers and strengthen continuity of care in underserved communities.

The DOC Act would also direct critical funding to a program which has been stagnant over the past several years, allowing for the expansion of existing THCGME programs and the creation of many new THCGME programs and residency slots. The expansion would address both general health workforce shortages and the persistent disparities magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Because 59 percent of THCGME training sites are in Medically Underserved Communities (MUCs), and research suggests that dentists and physicians are more likely to practice near the location of their training, this bill would likely increase access to care in MUCs and lead to better health outcomes among populations experiencing oral health disparities.

The ADA greatly appreciates your introduction of S.1958 and your leadership on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Jennifer Fisher at (202)789-5160 or [fisherj@ada.org](mailto:fisherj@ada.org).

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Klemmedson, D.D.S, M.D.  
President

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

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