

September 24, 2025

The Honorable Brian Babin, D.D.S.
U.S. House of Representatives
2236 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Babin:

As the leading authority on oral health in the United States, the American Dental Association (ADA), representing more than 159,000 dentists across the country, is committed to ensuring the highest possible standard of oral health care, including for our active-duty service members and their families. To that end, we support efforts to improve military dental care and bolster health infrastructure and treatment options.

The ADA strongly supports your amendment¹ (Floor no. 44) to the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to study the accreditation of all military dental treatment facilities (DTFs). Accreditation of these facilities is a crucial step to guaranteeing quality of care and ensuring the trust of military members in their health services.

As you know, your amendment aims to accomplish these goals by requiring a report to Congress on the implementation of Section 744(b)(4) of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2021², which mandated the accreditation of all military medical treatment facilities, including DTFs. Your amendment directs the report to include exact data on the scope of any DTF accreditation “gap,” identify remaining barriers to accreditation, evaluate the resources necessary to ensure full compliance, estimate associated costs, and provide recommendations to Congress for the mandate to be fulfilled.

A potential “gap” in accreditation does not necessarily indicate a lower standard of care in these facilities, but it does demonstrate that necessary safeguards to guarantee operational effectiveness may not be in place. This problem could be compounded by a recent 7 percent decline in military medical personnel,³ which could negatively impact the ability of these facilities to meet service demands. Routine dental care is not only a matter of promoting total body health; robust oral health care is critical for military readiness. Half of all military

¹ AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 119-8 OFFERED BY MR. BABIN OF TEXAS, https://amendments-rules.house.gov/amendments/BABIN_016_xml250828112746404.pdf

² H.R.6395 - William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, 116th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/6395/text>

³ Information Needed to Improve Monitoring of Military Personnel Staffing at Medical Facilities. GAO-25-106988, July 2025. <https://files.gao.gov/reports/GAO-25-106988/index.html?utm>

personnel with a “class 3” dental readiness designation will experience a dental emergency within two months and are not eligible for deployment.⁴

We were pleased to see your amendment adopted as part of H.R. 3838, the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026, which passed the House of Representatives on September 10, 2025.

The ADA supports your continued efforts to strengthen the military dental treatment system and secure military readiness. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and stand ready to assist as Congress works toward full implementation. For further discussion, please contact Nicholas Cargas, cargasn@ada.org.

Sincerely,

/s/

Brett Kessler, D.D.S.
President

/s/

Elizabeth A. Shapiro, D.D.S., J.D.
Interim Executive Director

⁴ Readiness Includes Dental Fitness, Good Oral Health. Defense Visual Information Distribution Service. September 2019. <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/342484/readiness-includes-dental-fitness-good-oral-health?utm>