November 15, 2019

The Honorable Tony Cárdenas
U.S. House of Representatives
2438 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cárdenas:

On behalf of the American Dental Association (ADA) and our 163,000 members, we are writing to thank you for introducing H.R. 4678, the Oral Health Literacy and Awareness Act.

As an organization dedicated to empowering our members to achieve optimal oral health for all, the ADA strongly believes in the importance of oral health literacy. In support of this goal, the ADA continues to educate its members on how to improve the health literacy of their patients and also provides information on oral health care through its consumer website, MouthHealthy.org.

H.R. 4678 would authorize the development of an oral health literacy campaign across all relevant divisions of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), including community health centers, oral health workforce programs, maternal and child health programs, the Ryan White HIV/AIDS program, and rural health programs. The oral health campaign would promote literacy and awareness programs that are evidence-based and focused on oral health care education, including education on prevention of oral disease such as early childhood caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancer. The campaign would be designed to address vulnerable populations such as children, pregnant women, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and ethnic and racial minorities, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians.

The ADA applauds HRSA for their commitment to oral health and believes the integration of oral health literacy would help strengthen their efforts. Evidence-based prevention strategies that are focused on vulnerable populations are key to ensuring good oral health for all Americans. It is for those reasons that we endorsed appropriations report language in the Fiscal Year 2019 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Bill on the oral health literacy campaign, and we are proud to support H.R. 4678, the Oral Health Literacy and Awareness Act.

Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue. The ADA looks forward to continuing to work with you. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Jennifer Fisher in the ADA’s Washington office at fisherj@ada.org or (202) 789-5160.
Sincerely,

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

/s/ Kathleen T. O’Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director

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