

May 5, 2021

Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, MD, MBA  
Surgeon General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Dr. Murthy:

The undersigned organizations, representing the oral health community and public health stakeholders, write to urge you to swiftly release the 2020 Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Office of the Surgeon General, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the U.S. Public Health Service's Oral Health Coordinating Committee in 2018.

The 2020 report is essential to document progress in oral health since the July 2000 publication of [Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). It will provide critical insight into issues currently affecting the nation's oral health, identify opportunities and challenges that have emerged since the 2000 report, and articulate a vision for the future of oral health in America. Just as the first report illuminated that oral health is more than healthy teeth and integral to whole health and well-being, we believe this report will be equally as impactful for Americans' overall health.

As you are aware, Surgeon General reports are comprehensive scientific documents—prepared by scientific, medical, and public health experts and produced through a meticulous, evidence-based approach. This report was no exception. The initial planning stages for this publication involved a Listening Session in November 2018, which elicited input from more than 150 health professionals, researchers, educators, and other experts; a public comment period, which resulted in 180 comments, including 40 descriptions of programs; and at least 19 responses from Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors who were asked to share exemplary public-private partnerships for improving oral health.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the report benefitted from<sup>2</sup>:

- Six Section Editors and 20 Associates to outline and expand topics and content;
- Roughly 300 researchers and health professionals to review science and practice and draft text;
- More than 50 experts to critically read and revise the document; and,
- Federal clearance procedures to ensure that standards of the Surgeon General and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services were met.

We greatly appreciate this Administration's emphasis and commitment to science and science's role in the federal government. While we understand that the transition from one Administration to the next will cause delays in the publication of the updated Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health, further delaying or rejecting its publication would be a disservice not only to the American people but also to the approximately 700 experts and professionals who worked so diligently to make this report a reality. It is a vital public health document and critical for moving our nation's health forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Albino, J; Dye, B; and Ricks, T. [2020 Surgeon General's Report, Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges, PowerPoint Presentation](#). June 2019, International Association for Dental Research 97<sup>th</sup> General Session.

<sup>2</sup> [2020 Surgeon General's Report, Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges, PowerPoint Presentation](#).

We encourage you to act immediately to review and publish this report. We are ready and willing to assist however possible. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact American Association for Dental Research Chief Executive Officer Christopher Fox at [cfox@aadrr.org](mailto:cfox@aadrr.org) or at 703.548.0066.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association of Dental Boards  
American Association of Public Health Dentistry  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Education Association  
American Dental Hygienists' Association  
American Institute of Dental Public Health  
Association of Dental Support Organizations  
Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors  
CareQuest Institute for Oral Health  
Cassis Dental Center  
Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin  
Dental Trade Alliance  
Dentsply Sirona, Inc.  
Henry Schein Cares Foundation  
Hispanic Dental Association  
Medicaid|Medicare|CHIP Services Dental Association  
Mid-Atlantic Dental Partners  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Dental Association  
National Dental Hygienists' Association  
National Interprofessional Initiative on Oral Health  
Oral Health Alliance  
Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP)  
Santa Fe Group  
The Gerontological Society of America  
University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry  
Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition

CC: Rachel L. Levine, MD  
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