

January 30, 2014

Martha J. Somerman, D.D.S., Ph.D.
Director
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research
31 Center Drive, Room 2C39
Bethesda, MD 20892-2190

Dear Dr. Somerman:

On behalf of our 157,000 members, we are pleased to comment on the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research's (NIDCR's) draft strategic plan to guide the Institute's research efforts from 2014-2019. We offer these comments in response to your email of January 14, 2014.

As you can see from the enclosed comments, we are quite pleased with the latest draft of your strategic plan. We are particularly pleased with the attention given to bioengineering, genetic and environmentally determined molecular factors associated with disease, and other directions in transformative research. We are also encouraged by the prospect of new research on the social, behavioral, and biological determinants of oral and dental disease.

We commend you for drafting a plan that effectively balances the research needs of dentists with those of patients, public health agencies, and the many other stakeholders in our health care system. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Robert J. Burns at 202-789-5176 or burnsr@ada.org.

Sincerely,

/s/

Charles H. Norman, D.D.S.
President

CHN:KTO:rjb
Enclosure

/s/

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

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Opportunity for Public Comment

Draft 2014-2019 NIDCR Strategic Plan

January 30, 2014

The American Dental Association (ADA) is pleased to comment on the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research's (NIDCR's) draft strategic plan to guide the Institute's research efforts from 2014-2019. The draft plan incorporates significant areas of importance and interest to our members and elements of the organization, particularly focused on issues of science as they apply to dentistry.

The draft plan is a thoughtful and comprehensive document for addressing both basic and clinical research directions relevant to dentistry and the public. We are particularly pleased that the draft plan builds upon the seven areas originally identified by NIDCR, which were submitted to stakeholders during the preparatory phase of the plan development.

Specifically we are encouraged that research in bioengineering, genetic and environmentally determined molecular factors associated with disease, and other directions in transformative research are amply identified. The plan outlines a strategy to integrate basic science and clinical research to enable a better understanding of diseases of dental interest. Pairing this knowledge with new technology may permit more precise and personalized delivery of care.

It is also gratifying to see the inclusion of research directions associated with development of specialized instrumentations and methods for advancing knowledge about oral health and disease (including, but not limited to, stem-cell systems, imaging modalities, and disease modeling).

In our initial comments of September 6, 2013, we noted the need for activities that can change our basic understanding of dental, oral and craniofacial diseases through prospective cohort or population-based studies. Your proposal to highlight large scale data management and acquisition at the molecular and population level is encouraging and can help the field of dental research advance in a manner that has occurred in medicine from such activities.

The focus on public-private partnerships identified in the draft plan reflects the same views we provided in our earlier response, and the inclusion in the final draft effectively balances the critical interplay between a multitude of public agencies and the private sector needed to advance some areas of dental research.

In summary, the ADA is pleased and impressed that all major areas important to our members have been addressed in the draft strategic plan, including public health issues related to social, behavioral, and biological determinants of oral and dental disease, and, importantly, the advancement of research that strengthens the evidence-based foundation of dental care.