

March 30, 2022

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Committee on  
Health, Education Labor and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Health, Education Labor and Pensions  
428 Senate Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

On behalf of our 162,000 members, we are pleased to express our support for S. 3799, the Prepare for and Respond to Existing Viruses, Emerging New Threats, and Pandemics Act (PREVENT Pandemics Act). This bill would leverage best practices and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance the nation's response to future public health emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the vital roles dentists can play in response to a nationwide public health emergency. One of those roles was realized when dentists were granted nationwide authority to administer the COVID-19 vaccines under the PREP Act.<sup>1</sup> Another was realized when 24 states<sup>2</sup> and the District of Columbia that granted dentists the authority to administer COVID-19 tests that were approved by the Food and Drug Administration for emergency use only.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention even recommended that dental personnel be placed in Tier 1 of critical workers who should be given immediate access to the initial limited supply of the COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>3</sup>

S. 3799 would better incorporate elements of the National Response Framework into federal decisions about how to rapidly enhance the nation's medical surge capacity. Since the framework already recognizes dentistry as a vital countermeasure during public health emergencies, the bill presents an opportunity for dentists to be part of those decisions<sup>4</sup>. It also aims to improve coordination among federal agencies and leverage the expertise and resources of other public and private partners, which would include the ADA.

Additionally, the bill would establish a pilot project to determine the impact a student loan repayment benefit would have on building the nation's bio-preparedness and response infrastructure.

More can be done to ensure dentists are granted the necessary authorities to mobilize sooner, and we would welcome the opportunity to explore that further. In the meantime, this bill will move us one step closer to optimizing the nation's response to public health emergencies.

We applaud your leadership on this issue and are pleased to offer our enthusiastic support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Chris Tampio at 202-789-5178 or [tampioc@ada.org](mailto:tampioc@ada.org).

Sincerely,

The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Richard Burr  
March 30, 2022  
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/s/

Cesar R. Sabates, D.D.S.  
President

/s/

Raymond A. Cohlma, D.D.S.  
Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> Seventh Amendment to Declaration Under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act for Medical Countermeasures Against COVID-19, 86 Fed. Reg. 14462 (March 16, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> As of Feb. 8, 2021, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia have allowed dentists to order and/or administer FDA-approved COVID-19 tests.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 Vaccination Playbook for Jurisdictional Operations (January 2021, Version 1.0) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Categories of Essential Workers: COVID-19 Vaccination (January 11, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> National Response Framework, Emergency Support Function #8 – Public Health and Medical Services Annex, Federal Emergency Management Agency (June 2016).