

May 15, 2023

The Honorable Andy Kim
2444 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Kim:

On behalf of our 159,000 members, the American Dental Association (ADA) writes to thank you for the introduction of the Dental Care for Our Troops Act. The ADA strongly supports legislation such as the Dental Care for Our Troops Act that would improve the oral health of our servicemembers. The ADA also strongly urges the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to include the Dental Care for Our Troops Act in the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

As you know, the Dental Care for Our Troops Act would provide premium-free TRICARE dental coverage to Reserve Component servicemembers. Roughly 130,000 Reservists and members of the National Guard do not have any form of health insurance, let alone dental coverage. Because servicemembers are required to meet dental and medical deployability requirements, the lack of insurance coverage among Guardsmen and Reservists presents a major challenge to the Reserve Component's readiness for deployment. Providing access to TRICARE dental coverage at no cost to these servicemembers and their families who currently have inconsistent dental coverage would not only help ensure the oral health of our servicemembers, it would also assist national security by making sure the servicemembers are able to deploy.

Providing TRICARE dental coverage for Guardsmen and Reservists would also take the burden of providing dental insurance coverage off of employers, thus incentivizing the hiring and retention of Guardsmen and Reservists. Many dentists serve in the National Guard and Reserves and would benefit from this hiring and retention incentive. Additionally, many dentists are small business owners, and this bill would help facilitate their hiring and retention of Guardsmen and Reservists.

The ADA applauds your leadership on this issue, and stands ready to work with you to improve access to oral health care for members of the Reserves and the National Guard. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. Megan Mortimer at (202) 898-2402 or mortimerm@ada.org.

Sincerely,

George R. Shepley, D.D.S.
President

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

GRS:RAC:mm

cc: Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees