

June 21, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair, House Committee on Appropriations
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Granger, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

On behalf of the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) and the Friends of NIDCR, we thank you for your leadership over many years developing and advancing funding bills that invest in our nation's research, science, and public health agencies.

While we appreciate the bipartisan effort to reach an agreement that prevented our nation from going into default, we are dismayed and alarmed by the deep cuts that the *Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (FRA)* imposes on non-defense discretionary (NDD) funding in Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 and 2025. The bill establishes stifling caps on NDD spending even though these investments represent less than one-sixth of the federal budget and is the source of funding for agencies and programs essential to the health, security, and wellbeing of the American people.

The spending caps included in the FRA are reminiscent of the steep budget caps that were enacted following the passage of the *Budget Control Act of 2011* and subsequent sequestration. Then, as is needed now, congressional leaders came together to enact bipartisan budget deals that mitigated the legislated budget caps over the course of the next decade.

In your position as lead appropriations in Congress, we urge you to set funding for FY24 at a level that recognizes the need for investment in vital scientific and medical research, and to support the programs and agencies that are critical to the nation's oral health. Specifically, we ask that you **prioritize funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR).**

For more than 130 years, the NIH has been America's most vital and trusted government-funded medical research enterprise helping save countless lives in the United States and around the world. The NIH, which funds biomedical research in every state across the nation, develops and maintains the human and scientific resources that enable America to continue to lead the world in medical discoveries. A strong investment in the NIH will ensure that our nation has the tools it

needs to train new scientists, accelerate life-saving research, and combat diseases and disabilities that afflict millions of Americans.

The NIDCR is the largest institution in the world exclusively dedicated to researching ways to improve dental, oral, and craniofacial health for all. Investments in NIDCR-funded research during the past half-century have led to improvements in oral health for millions of Americans and continue to show promise in multiple areas impacting the dental and craniofacial complex and overall health of Americans.

NIDCR grants support biomedical research at universities, dental schools, medical schools, and small businesses – research that addresses emergent public health challenges such as chronic orofacial pain syndromes, temporomandibular (TMD) joint disorders, opioid use and pain, oral health disparities, HPV-associated oral cancers, and the rising e-cigarette use among teens and young adults.

NIDCR-supported research is also expanding into exciting new areas of research, such as the interplay between the oral microbiome and the immune system. We now know that oral microbiota can help predict or identify a diverse range of oral and systemic diseases, including dental caries, periodontal diseases, as well as oral, colorectal and pancreatic cancer. Further research and investment in this area is critical to improving Americans' oral and overall health.

Understanding that you face challenging trade-offs this year to comply with the FRA budget caps, we urge you in your capacity as a congressional appropriations leader, to fund the NIH, NIDCR, and the nation's other research and science agencies at the highest possible amount building on FY23 funding levels. Investing in medical research has broad bipartisan support and is a genuine investment in our workforce, our nation's health, and our ability to compete globally at a time when our research supremacy is being tested.

Thank you for considering our views. We are extremely grateful for your leadership on this issue and past support of biomedical research, including dental, oral, and craniofacial research. If we can provide additional information or answer any questions, please contact AADOCR's Director of Government Affairs, Yehuda Sugarman, at ysugarman@iadr.org.

Sincerely,



Christopher H. Fox, DMD, DMSc
Chief Executive Officer, AADOCR



Paige Falion, MS
Chair, Friends of NIDCR