

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.¹ In addition, the report benefitted from²:

- 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.

¹ 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 97th General Session.

² [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 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
Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201