

2022 AADOCR and Friends of NIDCR Virtual Advocacy Day Congressional Visit Talking Points

**This document is intended to serve as a guide for your congressional visits. You are not expected to recite all of these talking points. Instead, we encourage you to use the document as reference to make the case for increased federal funding for dental, oral and craniofacial research and other oral health programs.*

INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with us/me today.
- I'm representing the American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) and Friends of NIDCR during our virtual Advocacy Day, and I'm a constituent of [ADD LEGISLATOR NAME].
- I am a [PROFESSION] at [INSTITUTION], where I [REDACTED].

PRIMARY ASK: APPROPRIATIONS FOR NIH & NIDCR

- We are here today to ask members of Congress to continue their support for federal research agencies and programs, particularly for the NIH and the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, or NIDCR.
- We first want to offer our strong support for the quick **passage of a full-year government spending bill for FY 2022** that includes the highest possible funding for NIH and NIDCR.
- For fiscal year 2023, I hope your boss will support our request of **at least \$50 billion for NIH**, which aligns with our coalition partners in the dental community, and a proportional level of **at least \$558 million for NIDCR** in fiscal year 2023.
- We are grateful to Congress for its longstanding bipartisan support of federal research at the NIH in previous years' government funding legislation.

BACKGROUND

- NIDCR is the largest oral health research funding organization in the world; providing the evidence base for oral health care, and for 200,000 U.S. dental practitioners.
- By investing in NIDCR, Congress is providing the Institute with the tools needed to improve the oral and overall health of the nation, reduce societal costs of dental care, and ensure a talented, well-prepared, and diverse workforce.
- The NIDCR needs adequate funding in order to expand its work addressing emergent public health challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, oral health disparities and inequities, chronic orofacial pain syndromes, opioid use and pain, the negative oral health consequences of rising e-cigarette use among teens and young adults, and HPV-associated oral cancers.
- Additionally, NIDCR provides training opportunities for the next generation of dental scientists and researchers.
- [SHARE YOUR PERSONAL STORY & HOW NIDCR HELPS YOU OR YOUR PROFESSION.]

COVID-19

- When COVID-19 emerged, NIDCR intramural investigators quickly adapted their research to focus on the pandemic.

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- For example, one team has examined the role that viral load – the amount of SARS-CoV-2 found in saliva droplets – plays in transmission of the disease, especially during speech.
- Another team adapted a viral antibody-detecting method so that it has the power to detect even trace amounts of antibodies in people with COVID-19 infection. They are continuing to advance this technology to develop a rapid, user-friendly screening test for community settings.
- To help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the nation's research infrastructure, federal research agencies, like NIDCR, need additional federal funding both to support research that was interrupted by the pandemic and to supplement research on COVID-19 itself.

OTHER ORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

- In addition to NIH and NIDCR, we are requesting that Congress provide **\$35 million for CDC's Division of Oral Health in fiscal year 2023.**
- The CDC Division of Oral Health is an important source of support for state health departments to help reduce oral health disparities through evidence-based community preventive interventions that also provide access to clinical preventive services.
- The CDC's investments in state and local health agencies and core initiatives like community water fluoridation and school-based dental sealant programs have helped to significantly reduce the incidence of oral disease among children and adults.
- Additionally, we ask that Congress provide **robust funding for the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Title VII Oral Health Programs, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).**
- We strongly believe that allocating resources to the entire research enterprise is critical for advancing the state of science. Importantly, a discovery in one area of research may be applied to another, and the collaboration between agencies is critical for bringing cures to all Americans.

ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY FOR HEALTH (ARPA-H)

- We ask that you support the **creation of ARPA-H, including a robust authorization** that will not supplant funding from traditional NIH Institutes and Centers.
- Please cosponsor H.R. 5585, the *ARPA-H Act*, which would establish this important agency, designed to invest in high-risk, high-reward research with the goal of speeding the discovery of new cures and treatments for health conditions across the board.
- ARPA-H would help fill gaps in the biomedical research ecosystem by utilizing a bold new approach focused on the development of evidence-based, real-world-driven cures for a range of biomedical and health research areas and diseases.

CONCLUSION

- Thank you again for taking the time to meet with us today. AADOCR staff will be following up with your office on all of these important issues.