Statement of AADOCR CEO Christopher H. Fox, DMD, DMSc on President Biden's Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Proposal

March 31, 2022 – The American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) appreciates President Biden's fiscal year 2023 budget for the investments it makes in science, innovation, and public health infrastructure, but is disappointed by the surprisingly low funding levels proposed for existing biomedical research and federal oral health programs.

AADOCR believes that $45.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2023, less than a 1% increase over current funding, is inadequate and will inhibit the Institute's ability to advance basic and clinical biomedical research. Further, $513.2 million for the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) is well below what the agency needs to fulfill its mission to advance fundamental knowledge about dental, oral, and craniofacial health and disease and translate those findings into prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies that improve overall health for all individuals and communities across the lifespan.

The meager funding increase for NIH included in the President's budget comes at a time when investments in the biomedical research enterprise are needed most to address critical national priorities, such as the acute and lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, fighting the opioid epidemic, expanding mental health research, and addressing health disparities and inequities.

We applaud President Biden for requesting $5 billion for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) in FY23. This health innovation incubator will empower the public and private sector to collaborate on high risk, high reward research with the goal of developing medical breakthrough technologies that address public health challenges. However, we are disappointed that the proposed investment in ARPA-H appears to come at the expense of necessary funding increases for existing NIH institutes and centers. Funding for ARPA-H must augment existing federal biomedical research at the NIH so that both agencies have the resources they need to achieve their unique research objectives.

AADOCR is further troubled by the funding levels proposed in the President's budget for federal agency programs that are vital to the oral health research community. Specifically, under the White House budget request, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII Oral Health Training Programs would be flat funded at $40.67 million, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Oral Health would be cut to $19.5 million, reverting funding back to the FY21 level.

We urge lawmakers to provide at least **$49 billion for the NIH's base program level**, and a proportional investment of at least **$540 million for NIDCR** in fiscal year 2023. It is imperative that federal funds allocated for ARPA-H supplement, rather than supplant, the core investment in NIH. In addition, we request that Congress provide at least **$35 million for CDC's Division of Oral Health** and **$46 million for HRSA Title VII Section 748** of the Public Health Service Act in FY23.

The medical research and oral health programs supported by these federal agencies enhance the knowledge base of health professionals, researchers, and policymakers to help improve dental clinical practices, close the gap in dental health disparities, and address a myriad of public health challenges. We urge the Administration and Congress to work together to ensure the entire research enterprise is equipped with the resources it needs and America remains the global leader in medical innovation.

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