

## **AADOOCR, ADEA and Friends of NIDCR 2023 Advocacy Day: Organizational Asks**

The American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR), the American Dental Education Association (ADEA), and the Friends of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR) urge Congress to prioritize funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), and Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Title VII Oral Health Training Programs.

### **We have four “asks” for Members of Congress:**

1. Pass an FY 2024 budget with adequate increases for NIH and NIDCR. Specifically, support a funding level of at least **\$50.92 billion for the NIH** in FY 2024.
2. Support a funding level of at least **\$558 million for the NIDCR** in FY 2024.
3. Support a funding level of at least **\$46 million** for general and pediatric dental residency programs under **HRSA Title VII** in FY 2024.
4. Cosponsor and support the ***Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act*** (H.R.1202/S. 704).

The research and oral health programs supported by these federal agencies enhance the knowledge base of health professionals, researchers, and dental faculty members with the goal of improving dental clinical practices, preparing the dental workforce, closing the gap in dental health disparities, and addressing public health challenges, including pain biology and management, opioid use, rising e-cigarette use among teens, temporomandibular joint disorders (TMJDs), and human papillomavirus (HPV)-positive oral cancers.

### **About AADOOCR**

The American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research (AADOCR) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to drive dental, oral, and craniofacial research to advance health and well-being. AADOOCR represents the individual scientists, clinician-scientists, dental professionals, and students based in academic, government, non-profit and private-sector institutions who share our mission. AADOOCR is the largest division of the International Association for Dental Research.

### **About ADEA**

The American Dental Education Association (ADEA) is The Voice of Dental Education. Our mission is to lead and support the health professions community in preparing future-ready oral health professionals. Our members include all 80 U.S. and Canadian dental schools, more than 800 allied and advanced dental education programs, more than 55 corporations and approximately 15,000 individuals. Our activities encompass a wide range of research, advocacy, faculty and leadership development, meetings, news and publications, including the esteemed Journal of Dental Education®.

### **About Friends of NIDCR**

The Friends of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR) is a broad-based coalition of academic and research institutions, professional associations and foundations that champion NIDCR, the world's largest institution dedicated exclusively to research to improve dental, oral and craniofacial health. With programmatic activities operated out of AADOOCR, FNIDCR helps represent the interests of patients, researchers, educators, clinicians and students and the value they find in NIDCR and its critical research.

## 2023 AADOCR/ADEA/FNIDCR 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 examples as prompts to make the case for increased federal funding for dental, oral, and craniofacial research and incorporate your own first-hand experiences.*

### INTRODUCTION

- Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today.
- My name is [REDACTED] and I'm representing the [choose one] [American Association for Dental, Oral, and Craniofacial Research] OR [American Dental Education Association] OR [Friends of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research].
- I live in [STATE], and [if applicable], I am a constituent of [LEGISLATOR NAME].
- I am a [PROFESSION] at [INSTITUTION], where I [REDACTED].

### FY 2024 APPROPRIATIONS: NIH, NIDCR, HRSA TITLE VII

- We are grateful to Congress for its longstanding bipartisan support and investment in federal research at the NIH, which has allowed the agency to advance biomedical innovation.
- We first want to offer our strong support for a return to regular order by Congress **passing a full-year government spending bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.**
- For FY 2024, we ask that your office support robust funding for the entire federal research and science enterprise. Our chief focus, though, is on the NIH, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), and HRSA's Title VII programs.
- Specifically, we ask that your boss support **at least \$51 billion for NIH**, and a proportional level of **at least \$558 million for NIDCR** in FY 2024. We're also requesting at least **\$46 million for HRSA's Title VII Oral Health Training Programs.**
- The \$51 billion figure for NIH represents a \$3.5 billion increase (+7.3%) over the enacted FY 2023 program level, which would allow NIH's budget to keep pace with the biomedical inflation and allow for meaningful growth.
- AADOCR supports the mission of ARPA-H and the promise of groundbreaking advancements in science that its work will support. Funding for the new agency should continue to supplement, not supplant, this necessary growth in the NIH base budget and the essential work being carried out by NIH's existing institutes and centers.

### BACKGROUND: NIDCR

- NIDCR is the largest oral health research funding organization in the world; providing the evidence base for clinical decision-making by over 300,000 U.S. dental professionals.
- NIDCR supports scientists at all stages of their careers, from high school students to independent researchers, and funds cutting-edge basic, translational, and clinical research to create the scientific foundation for oral health policy and practice.
- By investing in NIDCR, Congress provides 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.

## 2023 AADOCR/ADEA/FNIDCR Advocacy Day Congressional Visit Talking Points

- NIDCR needs sufficient funding to continue its work addressing emergent public health challenges such as chronic orofacial pain syndromes, opioid use and pain, oral health disparities, HPV-associated oral cancers, and the rising e-cigarette use among teens and young adults.
- NIDCR invested nearly \$400 million in 2022 to support biomedical research at universities, dental schools, medical schools, and small businesses.
- In recent years, the federal government's annual investment in NIDCR has not kept pace with biomedical inflation, nor overall funding increases for NIH despite its notable scientific accomplishments. **We ask that Congress provide a proportional increase for NIDCR within the NIH budget in FY 2024.**
- [SHARE YOUR PERSONAL STORY & HOW NIDCR HAS ADVANCED YOUR CAREER OR THE FIELD YOU STUDY/PRACTICE.]

### BACKGROUND: HRSA ORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

- There are 7,323 dental HPSAs (Health Professional Shortage Areas) in the U.S. covering 70 million people. HRSA's Oral Health Training Programs increase access to high-quality dental health services in rural and other underserved communities by increasing the number of oral health care providers working in those areas.
- HRSA provides grants for the pre-doctoral education and post-doctoral training programs for dentists and hygienists.
- HRSA's Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Program helps increase the number of dental and dental hygiene faculty in the workforce by assisting dentists and dental hygiene training programs that attract and retain faculty through loan repayment and help fund development programs to provide continuing education opportunities.

### RESIDENT EDUCATION DEFERRED INTEREST ACT

- Finally, we'd like to request your boss's support and cosponsorship of the Resident Education Deferred Interest (REDI) Act, which was introduced in the House (H.R. 1202) by Reps. Brian Babin (R-TX) and Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA), and in the Senate (S. 704) by Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and John Boozman (R-AR).
- The REDI Act would allow borrowers to qualify for interest-free deferment on their student loans while serving in a medical or dental internship or residency program (when they are least able to afford payments on the principal of their loan).
- The bill does not provide any loan forgiveness or reduce a borrower's original loan balance.
- Medical and dental residents who are able to save thousands of dollars in interest on their loans are more likely to open practices in underserved areas where there are dentist shortages.

### CONCLUSION

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



**AADOOCR/Friends of NIDCR/ADEA  
Advocacy Day 2023  
Talking Points for the Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA)  
Title VII Oral Health Training and Workforce Programs**

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**Support Funding for HRSA Title VII Oral Health Training and Workforce Programs:**

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for dentists is projected to grow 6% from 2021 to 2031 and for dental hygienists the demand is projected to grow by 9% from 2021 to 2031.
- Significant unmet need exists for dental care, especially in vulnerable and underserved populations. HRSA estimates that 70 million Americans live in the 7,323 dental shortage areas nationwide, requiring 11,957 additional practitioners to meet the need.
- The Oral Health Training Programs are helping to fix the dental access gap:
  - In Academic Year (AY) 2021-2022—
    - 7,132 pre-doctoral students, including hygiene students, were educated in oral healthcare as a result of HRSA Oral Health Training grants.
    - 711 post-doctoral residents received advanced training in pediatric, general and public health dentistry, 79% of those reporting that they are practicing in a primary care setting and 34% of those were in medically underserved communities.
    - 100 faculty received financial support award totaling \$2.1 million. 39% were from an underrepresented minority background, 29% were from a disadvantaged background and 15% were from a rural background.
    - Each of the above programs help increase the number of dentists and dental hygienists in the workforce.

## National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)

### Mission

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) aims to improve dental, oral, and craniofacial health. It also addresses public health challenges such as COVID-19, opioid use and pain, temporomandibular disorders, oral cancers, and health disparities within its mission areas.

### Key Facts

- Founded in 1948, NIDCR is the largest funder of oral health research in the world.
- U.S. spends ~\$124 billion annually on dental care, primarily for dental caries treatment.
- ~70% of all NIH's funding to dental schools comes from NIDCR
- Supports a large majority of NIH awardees who have dental or oral health-related degrees (78%).
- Research funded by NIDCR provides the evidence base for oral health care practices of ~200,000 U.S. dental practitioners.
- In 2023, NIDCR celebrates 75 years of advancements that have dramatically improved the nation's oral and overall health.

### High Profile Initiatives

- *Dental, Oral, & Craniofacial Tissue Regeneration Consortium (DOCTR-C)*: Initiated to accelerate innovative ideas into preclinical products capable of becoming successful treatments. First 2 phases supported many projects and created 2 Resource Centers (U. Michigan/U. Pittsburgh/Harvard & USC/UC San Francisco/Berkeley/Davis/UCLA/Stanford) to validate future products and provide technical support. Currently, program focuses on validation, manufacturing, & preclinical testing of most promising products to prepare them for submission for FDA approval to initiate clinical trials.
- *National Dental Practice Based Research Network*: Engages dental practitioners to expand the evidence base to improve oral health care. Launched in 2005, has enrolled >62,000 subjects & completed 63 studies, with another 8 studies underway. Studies include analyzing aerosols generated in dental settings to inform infection prevention strategies, using an mHealth app to assess pain after dental surgery, providing nicotine replacement therapy in dental practices, creating a dental implant registry, and informing evidence-based guidelines for use of antibiotics to treat periodontitis.
- *Temporomandibular disorders (TMD) research*: NIDCR is launching a national, NIH-wide consortium called the TMD Collaborative for Improving Patient-Centered Translational Research (TMD IMPACT) to improve clinical care for TMDs.
- *Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges report*: NIDCR lead Federal agency. Documents 20 years of progress since 1<sup>st</sup> Oral Health Report in 2000 & identifies challenges and opportunities as well as "calls to action" to transform how the U.S. addresses oral health, including future NIDCR research directions, oral health promotion, disease treatments, & strategies to overcome health disparities for all Americans.

### Impactful Stories & Latest Advances

- *SARS-CoV-2 detection in saliva*: Develop new, easy-to-use COVID-19 detection devices designed to be affordable and practical for use in a variety of settings: hand-held device that rapidly detects coronavirus in saliva & "smart mask" that changes color in the presence of the virus.

- Opioids de-implementation and pain research:
  - Increase use of non-opioid pain relief drugs, like NSAIDs &/or acetaminophen, following tooth extractions
  - A specific type of low-intensity sound can blunt pain in mice and could be further developed as a new, non-addictive strategy for pain relief.
  - Through the RE-JOIN Consortium within the NIH HEAL Initiative®, NIDCR will support interdisciplinary research to identify the nerves in the temporomandibular joint and discover new approaches to pain relief.
- Nanoparticle robots remove biofilms: Nanorobots containing anti-bacterial compound target & destroy dental plaque; they are controlled using tiny magnets to perform micro-scale precision cleaning in vitro. Could be used to prevent dental caries & periodontal disease and clean surfaces susceptible to biofilms, such as metal implants or hospital equipment.
- Understanding wound healing: Suppressing one specific gene called engrailed-1 can help prevent scar formation and instead trigger skin healing.
- Reducing health disparities:
  - Text messages can help improve oral health behaviors and reduce health disparities in underserved children.
  - Preventive health care for children enrolled in Medicaid may help reduce oral health disparities in children and was associated with increased dental visits.
- Oral cancer (including HPV-associated oral cancer): New initiative called Advancement of Head and Neck Cancer Early Detection Research (AHEAD) designed to help improve early detection; research on diagnosis and treatment; and research on prevention of treatment complications like dry mouth
- Rare Diseases: Research to help define optimal care and improve the quality of life for individuals with these disorders; and to provide insights into the molecular mechanisms of more common diseases and biological processes that help inform therapies for broader applications
- Health Information: Ensure that people have access to knowledge that is informed by NIDCR research in order to make wise decisions about health. The Institute has information available on more than two dozen health topics in English and Spanish.

## Training

- Practice-based Research Integrating Multidisciplinary Experiences in Dental Schools (PRIMED) will provide clinical research experiences, skills development, and mentoring at dental schools.
- NIDCR Mentored Career Development Award to Promote Diversity in the Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Research Workforce initiative designed to help early career-stage researchers from underrepresented populations in the U.S. research enterprise successfully transition to independent research careers.
- Mentoring an Inclusive Network for a Diverse Workforce of the Future (MIND the Future) initiative will provide training, mentoring, and networking opportunities for postdoctoral and junior faculty scientists from groups traditionally underrepresented in biomedical research to help support their pursuit of academic research careers.
- NIDCR intramural Dental Public Health and Research Fellowship, the only 3-year full-time combined dental public health and research fellowship program in the nation. Equips dental professionals with the skills and knowledge necessary to initiate and conduct impactful population-level oral health research that improves the well-being of individuals and communities.