March 16, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Labor, HHS, Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.  20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill, we ask for your continued support for programs crucial to addressing the unmet oral health needs of America’s children. Dental decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in the United States, even though it is easily preventable. In addition, children from low income families have three to five times the level of untreated dental disease compared to their more affluent peers. Children with chronic dental pain face difficulty in school and in their everyday lives, negatively impacting their development for years to come.

Pediatric dentists are crucial to meeting the nation’s health workforce needs. We urge the Subcommittee to include funding for Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Title VII pediatric dentistry training at no less than $12 million, including support for HRSA to continue funding grant opportunities for dental faculty loan repayment consistent with FY 2017 award criteria. We also urge continued robust funding for the overall primary care dental cluster (Section 748) and related dental programs.

This modest investment helps ensure highly-trained pediatric dentists can treat underserved populations and practice in underserved areas, thereby helping to stem the tide of early childhood dental disease. We thank the Committee for supporting this funding in the past, and request continued support in FY 2019.

Sincerely,

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress
Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress

Tim Walz  
Member of Congress

Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress

Daniel W. Lipinski  
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