

December 4, 2020



The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Shelby, Vice Chair Leahy and Ranking Member Granger:

The undersigned organizations, representing the Friends of National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (FNIDCR), respectfully request that as you work to negotiate the final fiscal year (FY) 2021 funding legislation you that maintain at least the Senate level of \$493.234 million for the **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)**. We also urge you to include supplemental funding to ensure the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has the resources it needs to continue funding critical research projects, including but not limited to, its COVID-19-related research.

We are grateful to Congress for prioritizing NIH research over the past several years by providing steady and meaningful funding increases. NIH's research, programs and networks are among the most valuable investments made on behalf of the American people, which has been made even more evident this year amidst a global pandemic. These sustained investments in federal research agencies continue to yield tremendous scientific opportunity. Moving into FY 2021, we must capitalize on this momentum.

As the largest institution dedicated exclusively to research to improve dental, oral, and craniofacial (skull and face) health, NIDCR is leading to “a world where dental, oral and craniofacial health and disease are understood in the context of the whole body,”<sup>1</sup>—an aim outlined in NIDCR’s 2030 strategic visioning initiative.

NIDCR-funded researchers are currently contributing to the knowledge base not only on improving SARS-CoV-2 detection in saliva and other COVID-19-related research, but also on pain biology and management, including non-opioid treatments for pain, and the social, behavioral, and genetic underpinnings of oral health disparities. NIDCR is also enhancing knowledge and improving public health across research areas including:

**Regenerative medicine.** NIDCR is a pioneer in regenerative medicine. Not only does the Institute support research into regenerative medicine, such as in autotherapies (treatments that take advantage of the body’s own ability to repair and regenerate damaged or diseased tissues), but it also serves as the lead NIH Institute on the National Academy of Medicine Forum and launched the multidisciplinary Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Tissue Regeneration Consortium (DOCTR-C) to translate regeneration research advances into treatments.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/research/research-priorities-nidcr-2030>

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**The oral health effect of e-cigarettes.** Over the past several years, e-cigarettes have become popular devices among both youth and adults. However, the research on e-cigarettes' effects on individual and population health is still in its early phases. NIDCR's initial research into the oral effects of e-cigarettes suggest that—despite being less harmful than cigarettes—they may have negative health effects, such as increasing the risk of developing oral cancer.<sup>2</sup>

**The oral microbiome.** NIDCR has been at the forefront of research into the microbiome—the genetic material of all microbes, including bacteria, viruses and fungi—and of encouraging collaborations across research disciplines. This encouragement led to a partnership between biomedical researchers and engineers to build microscopic nanorobots to target and destroy dental plaque—a technology that could be used to prevent cavities and periodontal (gum) disease.

While Congress' continued support for NIDCR has allowed the Institute to expand its research into these areas and beyond, NIDCR's funding has not kept pace with the increases provided to NIH. An increased FY 2021 appropriation for NIDCR would bring funding closer into alignment with the overall NIH request and allow NIDCR to build on its success to continue advancing the health of our nation.

We greatly appreciate your leadership to ensure the highest possible funding at NIH and NIDCR, and we urge you to continue making funding for this research a priority in final FY 2021 spending legislation. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact Lindsey Horan at [lhoran@aadr.org](mailto:lhoran@aadr.org).

Sincerely,

A. T. Still University - Missouri School of Dentistry & Oral Health  
A.T. Still University Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health  
Adenoid Cystic Carcinoma Research Foundation  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons  
American Behcet's Disease Association (ABDA)  
American Chronic Pain Association  
American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association  
American Dental Association  
American Dental Education Association  
Ear Community, Inc.  
East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine  
Fibrous Dysplasia Foundation  
Greater Tampa Bay Oral Health Coalition  
Harvard School of Dental Medicine  
Indiana University School of Dentistry  
International Pemphigus Pemphigoid Foundation  
Loma Linda University School of Dentistry  
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.  
Lymphangiomatosis & Gorham's Disease Alliance  
Midwestern University College of Dental Medicine Arizona  
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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30744164>

National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias  
New York University College of Dentistry  
Procter & Gamble Company  
Roseman University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine  
Rutgers University - School of Dental Medicine  
Sjögren's Foundation  
Texas A&M University  
The Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University  
The TMJ Association  
Touro College of Dental Medicine  
UCLA School of Dentistry  
UCSF School of Dentistry  
UNC Adams School of Dentistry  
University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry  
University of Florida College of Dentistry  
University of Iowa  
University of Michigan School of Dentistry  
University of Minnesota School of Dentistry  
University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry  
University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Rochester's Institute of Oral Health  
University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston  
University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry  
University of Utah School of Dentistry  
Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine

Cc: House Appropriations Committee  
Senate Appropriations Committee