



October 25, 2017

Honorable Greg Walden
Chair, House Committee on Energy and
Commerce
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and
Commerce
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

The American Student Dental Association respectfully urges your committee to extend funding for the National Health Service Corps (NHSC), Community Health Centers and the Childhood Health Insurance Program (CHIP). These programs are vital to our members and the patients they serve.

Currently, 10,400 NHSC members and 1,100 student members provide culturally competent care to underserved populations at more than 5,000 NHSC-approved health care sites in urban, rural and frontier areas. The NHSC loan repayment program and scholarships enable dental students to provide care after graduation in areas that are traditionally underserved. By qualifying for financial aid from the NHSC during dental school, these students are committed to practice for at least two years in these regions. In addition, more and more corps members elect to remain in these communities to practice after the term of their loan commitment expires.

Several dental students have recently received letters from NHSC stating that the organization has not received funding for next year and cannot guarantee any spots for the coming year. Without funding, dental students in the NHSC program will be hindered in their efforts to provide vital oral health care to eleven million people receiving care from NHSC-approved health care sites.

One in four children under the age of five has dental caries.¹ A way to mitigate this extraordinarily high level of tooth decay is to provide preventive oral health care services. The CHIP program affords health insurance to children whose parents earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid. It is important to ensure these nine million children continue to have access to preventive oral health care necessary for overall health.

Community Health Centers provide access to primary and preventive care to patients in every state. Without funding, community centers' effectiveness and reach to twenty-five million health center patients will be drastically hindered.

Again, we urge you to provide funding for the National Health Service Corps, Community Health Centers and the Childhood Health Insurance Program. The millions of Americans affected by barriers to care deserve access to necessary oral health care services. These programs are fundamental to delivering those services. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Stephanie Follett, ASDA senior manager, advocacy and policy, at 312-440-2490 or Stephanie@ASDAnet.org.

Sincerely,

Tanya Sue Maestas, Houston-Texas '18, president
American Student Dental Association

¹ ADA Action for Dental Health 'Year Two: A Progress Report.'