February 15, 2018

The Honorable Robin Kelly, Ph.D.
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Kelly,

The American Dental Education Association (ADEA) strongly supports H.R. 2422, the Action for Dental Health Act of 2017 (ADH), for its focus on national oral health promotion and disease prevention programs.

ADEA is The Voice of Dental Education, representing all 66 U.S. dental schools, more than 1,000 allied and advanced dental education programs, 66 corporations and more than 20,000 individuals. Our mission is to lead institutions and individuals in the dental education community to address contemporary issues influencing education, research, and the delivery of oral health care for the overall health and safety of the public.

More than 62 million people in the United States live in communities with limited access to dental care. Poor oral health can affect adults’ job prospects and quality of life. However, adults are not the only ones affected—dental problems are responsible for about a third of elementary school absences among children from economically vulnerable families.

All U.S. dental schools have clinics where they care for underinsured and underserved populations; in fact, our schools are one of the largest safety net providers for dental care in the country. In addition to dental schools, allied dental education and advanced dental education programs are part of the dental safety net. Each state has its own network of academic institutions and stakeholders that could benefit from the oral health grants provided under the ADH.

ADEA believes the ADH to be an important piece of legislation that will enhance ongoing efforts to reduce the barriers to oral health care facing many Americans today. We look forward to serving as a resource to you, the Congressional Oral Health Caucus, and the members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Valachovic, D.M.D., M.P.H.
President and CEO