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September 25, 2007

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell:

On behalf of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA), I write to convey ADHA's strong and enthusiastic support for H.R. 976, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007, which would reauthorize and strengthen the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

ADHA is particularly pleased that this bipartisan CHIP reauthorization agreement would provide stable dental care for children in poor working families. ADHA applauds your sustained leadership in working to improve access to oral health services for the nation's underserved. We also applaud the other important dental provisions in H.R. 976, including a directive to the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) to study the "feasibility and appropriateness of using qualified mid-level dental health providers, in coordination with dentists, to improve access for children to oral health services and public health overall."

In response to the call of workforce experts and the Surgeon General to enhance the oral health workforce capacity, ADHA is working to establish a new oral health care provider, the "Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner." This new provider would provide preventive, therapeutic and minimally invasive restorative services directly to underserved Americans. The Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner would be a member of a comprehensive health care team, and would refer to dentists those patients in need of more advanced oral health care services. This new provider would be state-licensed and would complete not only an accredited dental hygiene program but a masters level program. ADHA looks forward to GAO review of the

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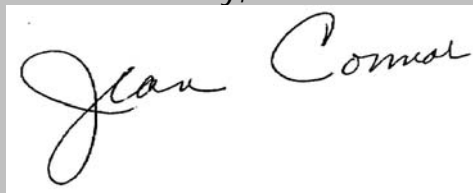
Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner and other oral health care providers.

Although dental caries (tooth decay) is fully preventable, dental caries remains the most common chronic disease among children – five times more common than asthma. The death in suburban Maryland earlier this year of twelve-year old Deamonte Driver from complications of an abscessed tooth provided all of us a tragic reminder that lack of access to oral health services can have serious – even fatal – consequences. The CHIP Reauthorization Act will improve access to dental care, a vital but too often overlooked part of health care.

ADHA is the largest organization representing the nation's more than 120,000 dental hygienists. Dental hygienists are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in each of the fifty states, who are vitally concerned about the nation's oral health, a fundamental part of total health

ADHA salutes your persistence in working to improve children's health. We also commend the outstanding work of committee staff Amy Hall and Bridgett Taylor. Please do not hesitate to contact me or our Washington Counsel Karen S. Sealander of McDermott Will & Emery at 202.756.8024 or ksealander@mwe.com with questions or for further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jean Connor".

ADHA President Jean Connor, RDH

cc: House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer
ADHA Board of Trustees
ADHA Executive Director Ann Battrell, RDH, MSDH
ADHA Director of Governmental Affairs Tim Lynch
ADHA Washington Counsel Karen Sealander