



American Dental Association
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October 12, 2007

Representative John Dingell
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell,

On behalf of the 155,000 members of the American Dental Association we are writing to thank you for your commitment to the oral health needs of America. Through the years you have understood the importance of good oral health care in maintaining an individual's overall health. During the recent debate involving reauthorization of the State Child Health insurance Program (SCHIP) you took it one step further by ensuring that quality dental care will be provided to the program's eligible children by setting a standard of coverage for dental services. This will stop states from dropping the dental services they now provide in the future; guaranteeing uninterrupted dental services for the nation's working poor.

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization (CHIPRA), H.R. 976, which was overwhelmingly passed by both the House and Senate, would:

- Provide basic dental care "to prevent disease and promote oral health, restore oral structures to health and function, and treat emergency conditions."
- Assure access to care and provide outreach to qualified individuals.
- Promote dental education for parents of newborns including "delivery of oral health education materials that inform parents about risk for, and prevention of, early childhood caries and the need for a dental visit within their newborn's first year of life."
- Improve accessibility of dental provider information to enrollees under Medicaid and CHIP by working with the Secretary of HHS and the dental community (including a hotline for parents to find dental providers and a quarterly-updated web page that provides a current and accurate list of dentists in Medicaid and CHIP).

Furthermore, CHIPRA clarifies that Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) can contract with private practicing dentists to provide care, which will help to expand access to dental care for underserved populations.

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The SCHIP legislation that you moved through Congress will go a long way to helping millions of Americans receive the oral health care they need to live a quality life. We know these provisions would not be included had it not been for the cooperation and dedication you expressed over the last several months.

We would also like to say how much we appreciated the work that you staff, namely Amy Hall, put into this legislation. Amy was always accessible, pleasant to work with and willing to consider our needs.

The American Dental Association once again thanks you and your staff, for your ongoing support for dentistry and our nation's oral health care needs.

Sincerely,



Mark J. Feldman, D.M.D.
President



James B. Bramson, D.D.S.
Executive Director

MF:JB:jcs

cc: Amy Hall
Kris Nicholoff, Michigan Dental Association