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March 14, 2017

The Honorable Scott Walker
Governor of Wisconsin
115 East, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Walker,

On behalf of The Wisconsin Dental Association and our 3,000 members, we request that you contact Congressional leaders in the U.S. House and Senate asking them to prioritize oral health as they consider legislation repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act.

Oral health is critical to overall health and well-being. Studies show that good oral health yields savings in future medical and dental costs, particularly among individuals with conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. Further, evidence shows that children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school than those who receive appropriate preventive care.

Time is of the essence. The House is currently in the process of marking up reform legislation that could impact the oral health of the citizens in our state, and the Senate will be considering it soon. We urge you to ask that Congressional leaders address the following issues of importance for ensuring good oral health in America. As chairman of the Republican Governors Association, you are uniquely positioned to inform Congress and the White House of the priorities for state governments looking to reduce federal influence on their programs.

With regard to **Medicaid Reform**, current proposals being considered are vague on the impact to dental benefits for Medicaid participants in our state. We ask that you urge Congress to:

- Assure comprehensive oral health services for children, particularly as Wisconsin looks to increase access for children covered by BadgerCare.
- Help states preserve adult dental benefits by allowing the use of any innovation funds in states that wish to expand coverage.
- Instruct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide guidance to state Medicaid providers regarding access to oral health services for beneficiaries.
- Ensure that states which did not expand Medicaid but used the tools available to them to expand coverage are not punished with a loss of funds under any new system.

As Congress gives our state more flexibility to set up its new state marketplace please ask them to consider:

Advocate...Educate...Empower...Serve

Dental Plan Transparency

- Promote transparency of dental plans to support consumer awareness on (1) premium and benefits, (2) out-of-pocket costs, (3) network adequacy and (4) participating health care professionals.
- Ensure consumer protection measures (e.g., effective appeal procedures) are required for dental benefit plans, as well as first-dollar coverage for preventive dental services.

Using Pre-Tax Dollars to Cover Expenses

- Expand the availability and flexibility of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).
- Preserve the current tax exclusions for employer-provided medical and dental plans.
- Allow tax credits to be utilized in purchasing both medical and dental coverage.

If health reform legislation addresses these three areas, it will help promote good oral health and expanded dental coverage for Wisconsin citizens. If you have any questions or require additional information, we are happy to provide it.

Sincerely,



Ned Murphy, DDS
President
Wisconsin Dental Association



Mark Paget
Executive Director
Wisconsin Dental Association