January 5, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Office of the Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Madam Secretary:

President Obama’s fiscal year 2015 budget proposed to eliminate the Children’s Hospital Graduate Medical Education (CH-GME) program and the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education (THC-GME) program, and move them into a larger Targeted Support GME initiative (TS-GME). In what appears to be an oversight, pediatric and general dental residencies funded under CH-GME and the THC-GME program were not included in the proposed TS-GME program.

We, the undersigned organizations, write to bring to your attention to this funding oversight. With the expansion of Medicaid coverage for more Americans under the Affordable Care Act and pediatric oral care being an essential health benefit, this is a critical time for training of oral health care professionals who will treat newly insured adults and children. With that in mind, dental residencies are imperative to educating the next generation of oral health care providers who serve this expanding population.

Therefore, we respectfully ask, as you finalize formulation of the fiscal year 2016 budget proposal, to expand dental residencies under the CH-GME and THC-GME programs, and/or expand the TS-GME program to include, and hold harmless, the number to dental residencies available under the other programs. Given the conclusive link between oral health and other systemic diseases it is critical that we have an adequate number of educated and trained health care providers for the future.

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and look forward to working with you to correct this oversight and insure that the next generation of oral health care providers are trained through dental residencies under CH-GME and THC-GME or the TS-GME program.

If you should have any question or wish additional information please contact Yvonne Knight, J.D., ADEA Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Governmental Relations, ADEA Policy Center at KnightY@adea.org or at 202-289-7201 or Mary Dietrich, Congressional Lobbyist at the American Dental Association at dietrichm@ada.org or at 202-789-5178.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Periodontology
American Association of Endodontists
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Women Dentists
American Association of Orthodontists
American Dental Association
American Dental Education Association
American Dental Student Association
American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists
Hispanic Dental Association
National Dental Association