

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 5, 2013

Dear Colleague:

Every year, countless low-income individuals and families are forced to forgo medically-necessary dental care due to Medicare and Medicaid's lack of dental coverage. Medically necessary dental care includes dental issues that have caused, or will adversely affect, a medical condition. For example, diabetics can face serious complications with their glycemic control if they also suffer from chronic periodontal disease or other oral infections. Additionally, individuals with end stage renal disease (ESRD) can suffer significant health risks if dental problems prevent them from following a specific diet. Access to dental care for vulnerable populations including low-income children is critical in preventing serious complications that can lead to more serious health problems and an increased cost of care.

In order to treat these vulnerable patients, dentists have started donating their services on a pro bono basis. To date, in excess of 18,000 dentists and oral health professionals have provided pro bono care to elderly, disabled and medically needy individuals in desperate need of dental and oral care. Despite their efforts, however, many people continue to needlessly suffer from the adverse health effects of untreated dental problems.

For this reason, we have introduced H.R. 963, the "Coordination of Pro Bono Medically Recommended Dental Care Act." This legislation addresses the lack of dental coverage in public programs by establishing a competitive grant program for nonprofit organizations to coordinate pro bono dental care for low-income and disabled Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP eligible individuals. These grants will help eligible organizations cover the administrative costs associated with activities like determining patient eligibility, maintaining proper dental records and coordinating with the volunteer dentists providing the care. The legislation authorizes \$2 million per year in grant funding, starting in FY14 and going through FY18. Estimates show that this small \$2 million per year investment will allow dentists to provide upwards of \$13 million in free services to more than 5,000 Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. And the cost savings from averted exacerbations of underlying health conditions could be significant.

Please join us in supporting the coordination of care for the underserved. Contact Emily Katz ([emily.katz@mail.house.gov](mailto:emily.katz@mail.house.gov)) with Representative DeGette or Monica Hueckel ([Monica.hueckel@mail.house.gov](mailto:Monica.hueckel@mail.house.gov)) with Representative Stivers to become a cosponsor.

Sincerely,



Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers  
Member of Congress