

May ___, 2021

Jeff Zients
White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator
Executive Office of the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Bechara Choucair, MD
Vaccinations Coordinator
White House COVID-19 Response Team
Executive Office of the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
US Department of Health and Human Services
1600 Clifton Road, NE, Room 5127
Atlanta, GA 30333

Marcella Nunez-Smith, MD
Chair, COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force
Executive Office of the President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Zients and Drs. Choucair, Walensky, and Nunez-Smith:

The undersigned organizations are committed to creating a health system that is more accessible, equitable, and connected. COVID-19 has magnified existing inequities in health and health care that undermine the ability of millions of people to lead healthy lives. Transformational change is needed, including the integration of oral health into primary care.

We applaud your priority goal of aggressively combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and your central strategy of getting all Americans vaccinated as quickly and as equitably as possible. We are championing the role of oral health care providers in conducting COVID-19 testing, educating patients about COVID-19 vaccine safety and efficacy, and administering vaccines. Today, we write with a suggestion for increasing the number of vaccinators, which will help eliminate vaccine distribution inequities.

While a limited number of states already utilize dental hygienists in their vaccinator workforce, we urge that you take steps to further tap into the nation's more than 226,000 dental hygienists. Utilizing this available cadre of licensed health care providers would augment the vaccinator workforce and accelerate the pace of vaccinations.

Dental hygienists are educated and licensed health care providers who could assist their communities by administering COVID-19 vaccines. Importantly, 45 states already allow dental hygienists to administer local anesthesia, which is administered through an injection. We understand that dental hygienists in the US

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Public Health Service have been authorized to administer the COVID-19 vaccines. We hope that you will take steps to allow their civilian counterparts to participate in these efforts, as well.

Indeed, President Biden's "National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness" specifically urges states to "surge their vaccinator workforce" through various methods including providing temporary vaccination licenses and expanding scope of practice for non-physician health practitioners. Urging states to specifically include dental personnel, including dental hygienists and dental therapists, would likely swiftly increase the vaccinator workforce.

Thank you for your consideration of our request that the nation's more than 226,000 dental hygienists be included in the vaccinator workforce. Please do not hesitate to contact Ann Lynch, Director of Advocacy & Education at the American Dental Hygienists' Association annl@ahda.net with questions or for further information. All of the undersigned and the CareQuest Institute for Oral Health are committed to assisting in combatting the pandemic and working to address inequity in health.

Sincerely,

LIST OF SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS