Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the American Association for Dental Research (AADR), which represents 3,700 individual and 103 institutional members working throughout oral and craniofacial research, I would like to express our opposition to using money from the Prevention and Public Health Fund (Prevention Fund) as an offset to pay for the Community Health and Medical Professionals Improve our Nation Act of 2017, or CHAMPION Act. While funding the primary care programs included in the CHAMPION Act is critical, we cannot fund them at the expense of other programs that are also dedicated to improving the health of all Americans.

The Prevention Fund, created to “provide for expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs to improve health and help restrain the rate of growth in...health care costs,” plays an important role in ensuring U.S. citizens lead healthier lives. Among its roles are supporting community prevention programs, such as tobacco cessation programs, and expanding public health research and tracking so we can better understand and target public health efforts.

Importantly for AADR members, the Prevention Fund also makes up roughly 12 percent of the budget for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including funding for the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, which provides nearly $4 million for state oral health programs. These state-based programs play a key role in supporting preventive dental care, such as conducting risk assessments, providing dental cleanings and fluoride varnishes, and reaching children with no dental insurance or dental providers.

Cutting the Prevention Fund by $6.35 billion, as proposed in this legislation, would be detrimental to our public health efforts in this country and would undermine the very programs that the CHAMPION Act seeks to support. For these programs to have the greatest effect, they should work in concert.

We ask that as the House Energy and Commerce Committee members work to extend funding for community health centers, the National Health Service Corps and other programs that they work to find solutions that do not cut or divert current or future funding allocations from the Prevention Fund. The Prevention Fund and its initiatives would benefit these programs, resulting in better care at the state level and healthier families across the nation.
Thank you for your time and consideration. AADR stands ready to work with you to as we collectively aim to improve Americans’ health.

Sincerely,

Christopher H. Fox, DMD, DMSc
Executive Director
American Association for Dental Research