September 5, 2017

Martha Somerman, DDS, PhD
Director
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research
31 Center Drive, Building 31
Room 2C 39
Bethesda, MD 20892

Re: NIDCR Proposed Research Initiatives for FY 2019

Dear Dr. Somerman:

On behalf of the American Association for Dental Research (AADR), we are writing in strong support of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) proposed research initiatives for fiscal year (FY) 2019. AADR applauds the efforts of NIDCR and recognizes that these initiatives cover a broad range of potential research themes. In the development and execution of these initiatives, AADR strongly encourages NIDCR to incentivize research collaborations across professions to 1) leverage research advances in other areas with assured inclusion of oral, dental and craniofacial research, e.g. research initiatives on the brain, pain and cancer and 2) further facilitate dental research integration into larger communities of science. AADR strongly supports the proposed research initiatives for FY19 and provides the following specific comments on three (3) of the proposed initiatives:

Advancing Our Understanding of Enamel Development

The objectives outlined in this theme and potential outcomes – especially the development of new research tools, such as new cell lines and models of amelogenesis – show great promise. The development of such tools could be useful in related research that examines the lifecycle, maintenance and remineralization and demineralization of enamel coordinated with human health outcomes.

Basic and Translational Research on HIV and AIDS-Related Pathogens in the Oral Cavity

The objectives outlined in this theme, if realized, would be an important step towards eradicating HIV and AIDS through the elimination of HIV transmission. Within this initiative, NIDCR should also encourage research into means of identification of HIV prior to clinical presentation of the disease.

Precision Imaging of Oral Lesions

Accurate screening is an important part of early disease detection, classification and appropriate treatment planning. Within this initiative, NIDCR should encourage research on how precision imaging of oral lesions changes clinical decision-making for improved outcomes and patient quality of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and feedback during the development of the research initiatives for FY19. AADR and our members stand ready to work with you to implement this impressive vision during the upcoming year.
Sincerely,

Christopher H. Fox, DMD, DMSc
Executive Director

Raul Garcia, DMD, MMedSc, FACP
President