The American Association for Dental Research is pleased to submit comments on the development of the FY 2019 Trans-NIH Plan for HIV-Related Research (Notice Number NOT-OD-17-053). We urge NIH to emphasize the high priority role of the oral cavity. Specifically:

**HIV vaccines:** The potential exists to incorporate novel oral adjuvants with systemic vaccines to enhance both potency and immunogenicity. Tonsillar tissue and the floor of the mouth/base of the tongue provide the opportunity for direct immunization of oral lymphoid tissue to induce local and systemic immunity.

**Microbicides & PrEP:** The mouth provides a convenient delivery system for local and topical targeted oral formulations targeting HIV and oral pathogens, for administration of long acting ART, and oral microbicides.

**Cure research:** The oral cavity is colonized with a distinct microbiome influencing systemic inflammation, a driver of HIV. There are oral HIV reservoirs, likely in oral lymphoid tissue, which can be targeted locally.

**Test & Treatment:** Develop new oral diagnostics for diverse applications in resource poor settings to be used for screening and follow up tests.

**Pathogenesis & Comorbidities:** The host’s oral microbiome, virome and mycobiome are likely relevant for HIV related immune activation and inflammation and presents an easily accessible target for intervention.

**Health disparities:** Oral health and dental needs remain the top two unmet needs for HIV infected persons. Research to reduce oral health disparities among this population is needed.

**Training:** The mouth is important to systemic health. Training the next generation of oral health researchers is critical to moving toward improved quality of life, HIV eradication, and to a cure.