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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AADR and Coalition of More than 90 Organizations Call on Congress to Stop Cuts That Keep America Safe and Healthy, Invest in Public Health

Alexandria, Va., USA – Today, the American Association for Dental Research (AADR), as part of the Coalition for Health Funding (CHF), which represents more than 90 public health advocacy organizations, released a new report documenting the dire consequences of Congress’s deep cuts to public health programs in recent years. “Faces of Austerity: How Budget Cuts Hurt America’s Health” illustrates how recent outbreaks of measles, the steady drumbeat of school shootings at the hands of mentally ill gunmen, and an epidemic of heroin abuse have all been exacerbated by cuts to programs designed to address such issues of public concern. AADR’s contribution to the publication highlighting the recent austerity measures significant impact on dental, oral and craniofacial research may be found on pages 36-37 of the report.

The National Institutes of Health – National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research lost $23 million in funding in fiscal year 2013 and only $10 million of that was restored in fiscal year 2014. However, when adjusted for inflation, the NIDCR budget is 22 percent, or $75 million, less than it was in 2002, resulting in the lowest number of research grants awarded in 13 years. Additionally, these cuts translated into fewer training slots at some universities for young and promising researchers; increased competition for grants; and layoffs of laboratory support staff, thus slowing the progress of promising oral health research.

Nationally, budget cuts have forced the layoffs of more than 50,000 public health professionals who monitor and respond to virus outbreaks, immunize children and the elderly, inspect restaurants, and care for the indigent. Public health departments in 33 states and the District of Columbia have reduced their budgets. Funds for public health overall, let alone the workforce, have been eroding for nearly a decade and the sequester cuts have led to a situation that makes us all less secure and puts our health at risk. It only gets worse from here: while we have some limited sequester relief in 2015, we face the full impact of sequestration again in 2016 and for years to come.

Treating oral health conditions is costly, with $110.9 billion in expenditures on dental services in 2012. Oral health disparities exist for many racial and ethnic groups. Future advances in health care depend on a sustained investment in basic research to identify the fundamental causes and mechanisms of disease, accelerate technological development and discovery, and ensure a robust pipeline of creative and skillful biomedical researchers.

“Continuation of budget cuts dictated by the Budget Control Act of 2011 would significantly impact our members, universities and research supported by the National Institutes of Health, and ultimately deny Americans a healthier future. This is particularly alarming because NIDCR-supported scientists are on the
verge of improving detection for diseases through the use of salivary diagnostics, said AADR President Timothy DeRouen. “We call on Congress to stop further cuts to biomedical research and public health programs.”


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The American Association for Dental Research (AADR) is a nonprofit organization with more than 3,400 individual members dedicated to: (1) advancing research and increasing knowledge for the improvement of oral health, (2) supporting and representing the oral health research community, and (3) facilitating the communication and application of research findings. AADR is the largest Division of the International Association for Dental Research (IADR). To learn more, visit www.aadr.org. AADR is a member of the Coalition for Health Funding (CHF), the oldest and largest non-profit alliance working to preserve and strengthen public health investments in the best interest of all Americans. Its member organizations represent more than 90 million patients, health care providers, public health professionals, and scientists.