

April 19, 2011

Dr. Howard K. Koh  
Assistant Secretary for Health  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Assistant Secretary Koh:

Thank you for meeting with us recently to discuss the department's plans to address various oral health issues. We were pleased to learn that the department is moving forward on several oral health issues and look forward to learning more about them and how the American Dental Association (ADA) can work with you to advance them.

We were very grateful to you and your staff for partnering with the ADA earlier this year on the announcement that the standard for fluoridated community water should be lowered. That is why we have asked for your help in addressing the concerns raised by Former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and Pastor Gerald Durley regarding the safety of water fluoridation for minority populations. We believe that this issue has the potential to gain traction. Being able to work with the Department to develop a response that is mutually supported would again be instrumental for supporting the safety and effectiveness of community water fluoridation.

We were also pleased to learn that you are aware of the dental community's desire to develop a national marketing campaign focused on the importance of oral health by working with the Ad Council. The ADA and other dental organizations representing the broad spectrum of the oral health community have already pledged financial support for such an effort. We hope that the Department will partner with us on this campaign.

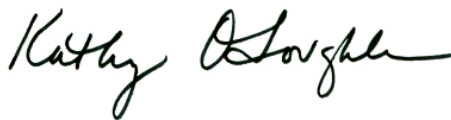
As you know, we originally scheduled our meeting with you to discuss our concerns about the downgrading of the CDC's Division of Oral Health (DOH). Because of dentistry's past experiences with losing dental departments, we remain skeptical that turning the Division into a branch will maintain a high focus on the surveillance, state-dental infrastructure, and prevention programs that are not only important to the Department but also to our members. The recent IOM report, "Advancing Oral Health in America" cites several incidences when federal dental program activities and resources were "reduced drastically, or altogether eliminated." We do not want this fate to befall the DOH.

Thank you and your staff again for meeting with us. We greatly appreciated the time you gave us and look forward to working with you to improve oral health in America.

Sincerely,



William R. Calnon, DDS  
President-elect



Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, DMD, MPH  
Executive Director

WRC:KTO:jcs