

With ACA reform underway, the ADA sent a letter to Congress on the ACA “repeal and replace” legislation and stated that:

- Future changes to the current U.S. healthcare system should not result in Americans losing dental coverage gained under the ACA.
- Any changes made that affect the insurance market should foster competition while ensuring consumers can purchase high-quality, comprehensive oral health coverage that includes a separate dental deductible, first-dollar coverage for preventive services, and limits patient out-of-pocket costs.
- Any replacement legislation should provide tax credits for both individuals and small businesses to help with the purchase of health insurance coverage, including dental plan coverage.
- Tax preferred accounts, such as Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) and Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs), should be expanded.
- Any changes to Medicaid should preserve the existing requirement for oral health services for children up to age 21 and increase access to oral health services for low-income adults, vulnerable elders and low-income pregnant women.
- U.S. consumers deserve greater plan transparency so that they can be empowered to make personally-responsible decisions about their healthcare. Such transparency can be fostered through the use of quality metrics at the plan level that have been endorsed by the Dental Quality Alliance, consumer satisfaction ratings, and easy-to-use and accurate participating provider lookup tools.
- The ADA supports federal tort reform legislation designed to rectify the problems in the current system which we believe unnecessarily contribute to the cost of health care.
- The ADA also supports a repeal of the McCarran-Ferguson antitrust provision that currently grants health insurance plans an exemption from certain antitrust laws.
- The expansion of Title VII training programs for dentistry, additional funding authorization for the National Health Service Corps, and funding for community health centers (CHCs) should be preserved to ensure a strong public health infrastructure.

The Board of Trustees has a Licensure Task Force which is charged to support the professional mobility of dentists by increasing the portability of licensure and to eliminate the patient-based component of the licensing exam, replacing it with alternative methodologies for assessing readiness for practice that are reliable, valid and protect the safety of the public.

Based on the taskforce members input, it appears that the openness and readiness for change varies greatly – from a perceived readiness to accept all pathways to licensure to a strong commitment to only accepting one, traditional high-stakes licensure exam. Changes to licensure will be evolutionary, not revolutionary; change will occur one jurisdiction at a time; and an “evidence-based” approach to licensure reform is needed as state boards are not likely to respond to emotional appeals.

The Licensure Task Force believes that it is critical for the Association to maintain its commitment and support for this activity. While it is recognized that each state dental association and each state board of dentistry have unique circumstances & challenges related to licensure reform, the ADA must play a strong supportive role, advocating with state dental society’s for change.

Judith M. Fisch, DDS  
ADA First District Trustee