



• **HISPANIC DENTAL ASSOCIATION • NATIONAL DENTAL ASSOCIATION •**
• **SOCIETY OF AMERICAN INDIAN DENTISTS •**
A MULTI-CULTURAL ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT

February 29, 2012

The Honorable Joan Carter Conway
Chairwoman, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

Dear Senator Conway:

Thank you for your unyielding commitment and dedication to the oral health of children and families in Maryland. Senate Bill 867, “Oral Health Education – Certification and Monitoring” is a testament to your visionary understanding of the comprehensive health care and prevention education that is need to improve the physical well being of all Americans.

Employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits for themselves and their children. Oral-facial pain, as a symptom of untreated dental and oral problems and as a condition in and of itself, is a major source of diminished quality of life. It is associated with sleep deprivation, depression, and multiple adverse psychosocial outcomes.

Incorporating oral health education into public school curriculums is a safe and effective measure to help prevent the most common dental diseases - dental caries and periodontal diseases. It is consistent with the mission of the National Dental Association (NDA) and we applaud your crafting of this seamless legislation that I hope to encourage the state of Mississippi to embrace.

As I am sure you know, we too needlessly lost 6 year-old Alexander Collander to a dental infection, just a few days after the death of your 12 year-old Deamonte Driver. Maryland and Mississippi cannot bring back these children but we can continue to do all that we can to help ensure that another child does not die from dental disease. We should take the opportunity that the 13 years of public school education (kindergarten through grade 12) offers to help educate future generations about the importance of good dental health.

The National Dental Association asks that Senate Bill 867 receive a favorable committee report. We appreciate your leadership and the fine work that the Health Education and Environmental Affairs Committee is doing in the great state of Maryland. Please do not hesitate to contact the NDA for further input and support.

Sincerely,

Roy R. Irons, DDS
President