



April 24, 2017

The Honorable Dr. Joaquin Arambula
Chair, Sub 1 Health and Human Services
Assembly Committee on Budget
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dr. Richard Pan
Chair, Sub 3 Health and Human Services
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Ensuring Access to Dental Care for California Low-Income Seniors

Dear Chairmen Arambula and Pan:

Despite significant advances in dentistry and our ability to prevent many oral healthcare issues, dental disease remains a significant and widespread problem in America, particularly for low-income seniors. If improvements in access, affordability, education and awareness do not occur, oral disease and related health issues will become an increasingly prevalent and costly public health issues for our aging population. Establishing and maintaining good oral healthcare is critical to successful aging.

To address the need for oral healthcare for seniors, Gary and Mary West created the Gary and Mary West Senior Dental Center (GMWSDC), a nonprofit, integrated community dental center dedicated to serving low-income seniors in downtown San Diego. The mission of GMWSDC is to provide affordable, high-quality oral healthcare with comprehensive education, clinical, and wellness services for seniors in need, enabling them to live healthy and productive lives. The Senior Dental Center, launched in October 2016, links high-quality and affordable oral healthcare with a suite of nutrition, case management and wellness services offered through the Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center, creating a one-of-a-kind, integrated community-based system of care for adults.

Like so many others, we too are interested in advancing realistic policies driven by addressing the needs of vulnerable seniors. Over 85 percent of our senior patients at GMWSDC are covered by the Denti-Cal program, and 55 percent report cost as a barrier to receiving dental care.



I invite you to tour our Senior Dental Center to learn firsthand about the oral health needs of our low-income seniors, and about the critical importance of adequate access and reimbursement incentives to providers to facilitate this access to appropriate care for low-income seniors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shelley Lyford", written in a cursive style.

Shelley Lyford
Chief Executive Office