



CDA and resource centers applaud governor's signing of 2022-23 budget to improve access to care for patients with special needs

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Sacramento, Calif. — The California Dental Association, Association of Regional Center Agencies and The Arc of California applaud Gov. Gavin Newsom's signing of the 2022-23 budget that provides one-time funding to improve access to oral health care for vulnerable populations, including people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, physical disabilities and cognitive declines such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

The \$50 million in funding from the state's budget surplus will pay for the construction, expansion or adaptation of special needs dental clinics and surgical centers in California to expand access to dental care for individuals who are unable to undergo dental procedures in traditional dental offices due to special health care needs or the complexity of the care needed. Lack of access to dental care for patients with special needs has been a long-standing crisis, even as the state has made strides to increase access in the Medi-Cal dental program. Existing settings such as dental schools and specialized clinics are often backlogged with significant treatment waitlists — often stretching months or years — which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The expansion of settings for patients with special health care needs is long overdue and will significantly increase access to oral health care," said Dr. Ariane Terlet, president of the California Dental Association. "We are thrilled the governor and Legislature recognize the dire need for this investment to ensure health equity so that patients have timely access to oral health care."

"These funds will help create the brick and mortar needed to build out services for people with developmental disabilities. ARCA is thrilled to see the inclusion of funds to meet the critical, yet often overlooked, need for specialized dental services," said Amy Westling, executive director of the Association of Regional Center Agencies, an organization that

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advocates on behalf of and coordinates services for nearly 400,000 people with developmental disabilities.

"As a parent of a son with significant disabilities, and also as a dental hygienist for 45 years, I am extraordinarily relieved and grateful to see the Legislature and Gov. Newsom prioritize dental access for Californians with special needs. For too long our state has been in crisis mode as people with disabilities have been unable to receive critically important dental care. This funding is the first step in ensuring ALL Californians have access to dental assessments and needed care," said Pat Hornbecker, president of The Arc of California, a community-based organization advocating for and with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Under the new budget, a one-time \$50 million investment (\$25 million a year over two years) will be awarded in grants of up to \$5 million by the California Health Facility Financing Authority to create 10 or more permanent sites specific to special needs dental care. To be eligible for a grant, recipients would need to ensure that at least 50% of their patient population has special health care needs for 10 years and enroll as a Medi-Cal provider.

About the California Dental Association

The California Dental Association is the nonprofit organization representing organized dentistry in California. Founded in 1870, CDA is committed to the success of our members in service to their patients and the public. CDA also contributes to the oral health of Californians through various comprehensive programs and advocacy. CDA's membership consists of more than 27,000 dentists, making it the largest constituent of the American Dental Association. For more information, visit cda.org.

About ARCA

The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) represents the network of 21 community-based nonprofit regional centers that coordinate services for, and advocate on behalf of, nearly 400,000 Californians with developmental disabilities.

About The Arc

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.