

November 2, 2021

Chairwoman Anna Eshoo
Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Honorable Anna Eshoo,

On behalf of the Delta Dental Institute, I write to express our sincere appreciation for your focus on the critical topic of oral health literacy. The Delta Dental Institute advocates for improving the oral and overall health of all Americans, and supports Congressional efforts to address and advance these and similar initiatives.

Health literacy plays a critical role in driving health outcomes; enabling patients to make informed decisions about their care. Since its inception, the Delta Dental Institute has been making strategic investments in research and education designed to improve *oral health* literacy. For example, in a recent Delta Dental Institute white paper, [“Improving America’s Oral Health Literacy,”](#) the authors found that while the public recognized the connection between oral and overall health, discrepancies in oral health *outcomes* remain, due in part to low levels of oral health literacy.

Further, responses to questions the Delta Dental Institute recently fielded as part of a national public opinion [poll](#) indicated that while most Americans feel generally positive about their ability to understand health information, there are gaps for low-income, aging, and rural communities that are important for all stakeholders, including dental health professionals, insurers, health funders, employers, and others, to address.

Additionally, the Delta Dental Institute recently convened an expert conversation on oral health literacy. The conversation will be published in the coming weeks so the public can hear expert insights on solutions for the future from across the healthcare industry. The Delta Dental Institute will continue to develop and promote these kinds of collaborative efforts on oral health literacy and other pressing topics.

Improving oral health literacy is a public health priority, and we urge the Subcommittee to continue to highlight the importance of this topic while advancing equitable policies and initiatives that mitigate the types of disparities many Americans are facing. Please consider the Delta Dental Institute as a key resource on this issue moving forward. If we can be of assistance to you or your staff in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Vivian Vasallo

Executive Director, Delta Dental Institute