

February 27, 2023

Members of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee

Pocahontas Building

900 East Main Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Members of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee,

We write to urge you to support budget language to allow initial planning for a new school of dentistry building on VCU's MCV campus. The current facilities at Virginia's only dental school are nearly 70 years old with more than \$30 million in deferred maintenance costs.

These deteriorating facilities present challenges to educating the next generation of dentists and dental hygienists as well as to serving as the largest provider of dental care to patients in the Medicaid program in the Commonwealth.

More than 30,000 patients a year access dental care at the VCU School of Dentistry and VCU dental students treat patients in 14 safety-net clinics located in health professional shortage areas around Virginia.

A new school with increased clinical capacity, specialized equipment and cutting-edge technology will better support the increasing demand from these populations. Proper infrastructure will increase patient capacity and allow the school to better address Virginia's oral health workforce challenges, including access to care in rural areas.

It will allow for growth in emerging dental specialties and introduce an advanced prosthodontics program that is sorely needed by Virginia's aging residents.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions regarding this critical investment to allow initial planning for a critical investment in Virginia's oral healthcare future. The VDA and its nearly 4,000 member dentists in Virginia appreciate your careful review and inclusion of planning authorization for a new school of dentistry building in the budget.

Sincerely,



Ryan Dunn
CEO



Cynthia Southern, DDS
President

CC: April Kees, Director, Senate Finance and Appropriations