

April 23, 2019

The Honorable Henry Cuellar
2372 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cuellar:

On behalf of the members of the undersigned dental organizations, we are writing to you regarding H.R. 951, the United States-Mexico Tourism Improvement Act.

H.R. 951 would expand the tourism industries in the United States and Mexico by emphasizing exchanges in various sectors, including dental care. The Secretary of State would develop a strategy to develop this type of tourism, including fostering partnerships between dental institutions in the United States and Mexico.

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) serves the oral health needs of the public through the development and administration of standards that foster continuous quality improvement of dental and dental-related educational programs. Accreditation ensures academic quality and public accountability.

The below organizations support CODA's initiative to offer consultation and accreditation services to international schools. The international schools must comply with the same standards as all U.S. programs. Currently, no Mexican dental schools are accredited through CODA. Schools that are interested in becoming accredited through the commission should visit <https://www.ada.org/en/coda> to learn more.

We believe that, until Mexican programs have received CODA accreditation, U.S. dental institutions should not build relationships with Mexican institutions for the purpose of having patients visit Mexican facilities for treatment. The patient sense of security mentioned in H.R. 951 cannot be guaranteed without CODA accreditation. We urge you to include this in your legislation. Additionally, when assessing the feasibility of building partnerships among dental institutions between the United States and Mexico, we urge the United States to consider other factors critical to patient safety, such as licensure of dentists and facilities following accepted asepsis, infection control and biohazard control protocols. These safeguards are critical components to dental care that patients in the United States take for granted. Lack of attention to these details may lead to a false sense of security for patients seeking care outside of the United States.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Megan Mortimer at (202) 898-2402 and mortimerm@ada.org or Ms. Karen Hart at (312) 440-2825 and hartk@ada.org.

Sincerely,

American Dental Association
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

American Association of Endodontists
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthodontists
American Association of Women Dentists
American College of Prosthodontists
American Dental Education Association
American Student Dental Association