April 1, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joni Ernst
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
272 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Drew Ferguson IV, DDS
1032 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA)

Dear Senator Baldwin, Senator Ernst, Representative Eshoo, and Representative Ferguson:

The undersigned organizations write to express our support for (S. 754/H.R. 1916) the *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act* (ELSA). This bipartisan legislation will have a direct impact on patients and will eliminate the existing burdens that prevent access to necessary diagnosis and treatment for those with congenital anomalies or birth defects.

We appreciate your leadership in recognizing the importance of ensuring access to the medically necessary items and services necessary to functionally improve, repair, or restore bodily function or approximate a normal appearance due to a congenital anomaly, such as cleft lip and palate, skeletal and maxillofacial abnormalities, facial paralysis, microtia, hypodontia, and craniosynostosis.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classifies birth defects as "common, costly, and critical" and reports that approximately four percent of children in the United States suffers from a congenital anomaly. Craniofacial anomalies, for example, can restrict a patient's ability to breathe, eat, and speak in a normal manner. Therefore, highly personalized surgery to repair an anomaly helps the patient grow and function normally. Early intervention by a team of specialists, including plastic surgeons, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, pediatric dentists, orthodontists, dermatologists and speech therapists, is necessary to assess and oversee the patient's treatment and development, sometimes over the course of several years.

While many private health insurance companies cover the preliminary procedures, they can routinely deny or delay follow-up or corrective procedures claiming that they are cosmetic in nature– which fails to recognize the medical conditions of these patients. Delays in medically necessary care can negatively impact a child's developmental milestones and coverage denials of a child's reconstructive surgery can result in families turning to Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, or other safety net programs for coverage. That is why we support the *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act* which would require all private group and individual health plans to cover medically necessary items or services that improve, repair, or restore a patient's anomaly – ensuring patients access to lifesaving treatments.

Thank you again for your support and leadership on this important issue. As patients, families, and health professionals, we are committed to working with you toward passage of the *Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act.*

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry
American Academy of Dental Group Practice
American Academy of Endodontists
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
American Academy of Periodontology
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
American Association of Orthodontists
American Association of Women Dentists
American Behcet's Disease Association
American College of Prosthodontists
American College of Surgeons
American Dental Association
American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists
American Society of Plastic Surgeons
American Student Dental Association
Barth Syndrome Foundation
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
Cutis Laxa Internationale
Derma Care Access Network
Dermatology Nurses' Association
FACES: The National Craniofacial Association
Genetic Alliance
Hispanic Dental Association
International Pemphigus and Pemphigoid Foundation
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Lymphedema Advocacy Group
M-CM Network
Mito Action
MLD Foundation
National Dental Association
National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias
Noah's Hope - Hope4Bridget
Pathways for Rare and Orphan Studies
PXE International, Inc.
Rare and Undiagnosed Network
Soft Bones: The US Hypophosphatasia Foundation
Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndromes Foundation
The XLH Network, Inc.
Usher 1F Collaborative