



*2015 Mid-Year
Impact Report*

Hon. Dr. Robin L. Kelly

Chair, Congressional Black
Caucus Health Braintrust

CONTENTS

Advocacy Through Action 3
Supporting Medical Research & Innovation	4
Touching Communities	5
Mid-Year Highlights	7
Coming Attractions11
Outreach and Engagement	13
Press Clips14

CONGRESSWOMAN ROBIN L. KELLY (D-IL)

CHAIRWOMAN OF THE CONGRESSIONAL
BLACK CAUCUS HEALTH BRAINTRUST



“I’m committed to promoting the need for trusted, independent information and innovative solutions that respond to the major health issues facing our nation and its people.”

Dear Friend,

Six months ago, I was honored to be chosen to serve as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust. When I took the helm of this venerable institution I did so because I’m committed to promoting the need for trusted, independent information and innovative solutions that respond to the major health issues facing our nation and its people.

The theme of the 2015 Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust is “The March Toward Health Equity.” This is in honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Civil Rights demonstration, and also the 30th Anniversary of the release of The Heckler Report – which among other things led to creation of the Office of Minority Health. In remembering Selma, I’m reminded that, before his death, Dr. King said “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” Dr. King, who had been beaten and bloodied, hosed and bitten by dog and human alike for the cause of racial justice found injustice in healthcare to be the MOST shocking and inhumane form of inequality. I couldn’t agree more.

I promised that this would be an engaged, active, accessible, and transparent Health Braintrust. To that end, I have put together this six month recap of our work thus far, and our road ahead. I look forward to continuing to work together with you to meet the challenge of developing strategies that improve health outcomes for vulnerable Americans across the socio-economic spectrum, and thank you for working with me this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin L. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature is a solid black horizontal line.

ADVOCACY THROUGH ACTION



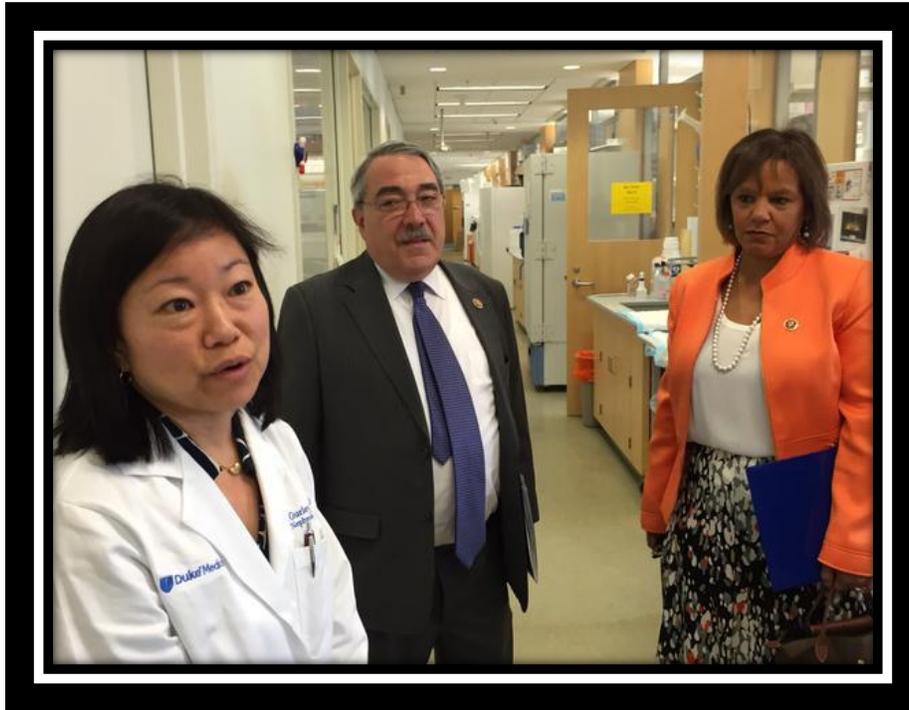
Dr. Kelly working with Congressional Tri-Caucus Members to improve health outcomes in communities.

In her first five months as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust, **Dr. Robin Kelly** has pursued an aggressive, community-centric agenda focused on engaging local stakeholders, galvanizing Members of Congress, and supporting common-sense legislative initiatives that improve public health.

Achieving health equity in a generation is possible, and Dr. Kelly is pushing Congress towards this goal by:

- Pushing federal legislators to commission a greater body of research on the impact of social and environmental factors on health.
- Increasing the level of engagement between the Health Braintrust and health policy experts.
- Strengthening connectivity between community advocates and elected officials to facilitate the development of strategies that improve health outcomes in vulnerable communities.
- Introducing health legislation to tackle our nation's most pressing healthcare challenges.
- Supporting investments in medical research and innovation.
- Working to strengthen the diversity pipeline in medicine.
- Producing the 2015 Kelly Report on Health Equity in America, an official Congressional Report examining the root causes and impact of health disparities in America and providing a comprehensive set of legislative and policy recommendations to reverse them.

SUPPORTING MEDICAL RESEARCH & INNOVATION



In March, Congresswoman Kelly and Congressional Black Caucus Chairman G.K. Butterfield toured Duke University Hospital's Department of Nephrology to discuss kidney health, treatment, and research.

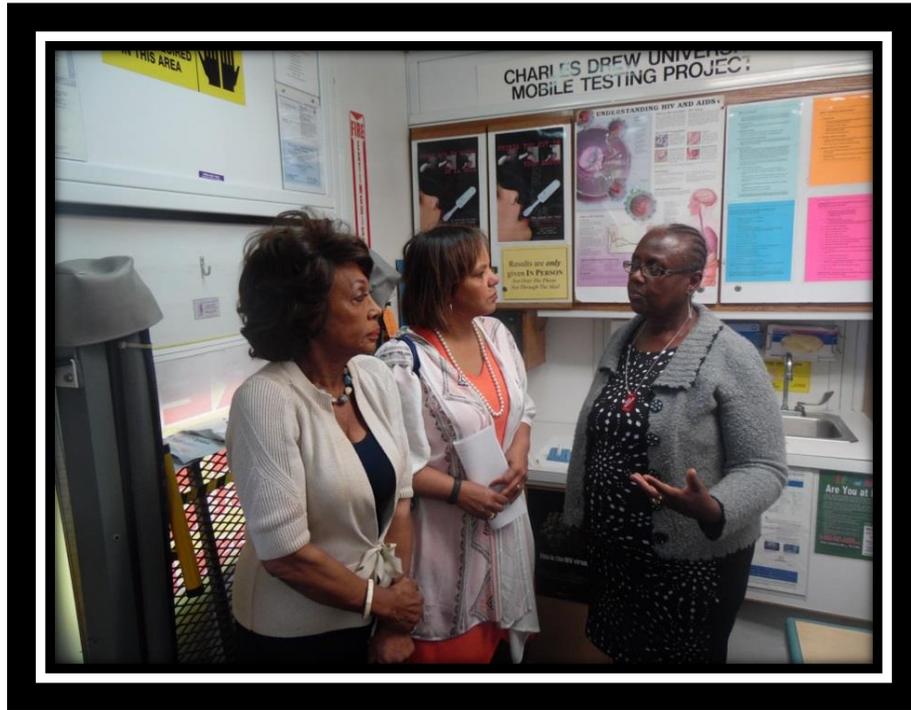
Medical research and innovation have led to powerful new discoveries and treatments that are transforming the way we treat diseases like HIV/AIDS, kidney disease and cancer. Not only do these advancements help us live longer and better, they create newfound opportunities in the public health space - including jobs. America is the global leader in research and innovation and as Health Braintrust Chair, Dr. Kelly is working to further Congressional support for funding in medical research and innovation because this will spur discoveries that save lives and revolutionize medicine.

Since taking over as Health Braintrust Chair in January, Dr. Kelly Has:

- **Met with medical experts at Duke University Hospital's Department of Nephrology** to discuss the needs of patients facing kidney conditions, end-stage renal disease, transplantation and hypertension.
- **Toured cutting-edge biotechnology and healthcare companies** in order to focus on developing innovative therapeutics in areas of critical medical need.

- **Facilitated the inclusion of additional investment in Health Information Technology** in the Congressional Black Caucus FY-16 Alternative Budget.

TOUCHING COMMUNITIES



CBC Health Braintrust Chair Dr. Robin Kelly and Congresswoman Maxine Waters tour a mobile HIV testing unit at Charles Drew University during the Health Braintrust’s HIV/AIDS Awareness Tour.

In the 114th Congress, Chairman Kelly’s Braintrust has directly engaged communities across the country in order to gather intelligence on health trends and mobilize public health stakeholders to work with the CBC to craft effective public health strategies.

2015 Health Braintrust Community Engagement:

- ***California HIV/AIDS Tour (May 2015):*** Congresswoman Kelly recently conducted a tour of Oakland and Los Angeles, CA (areas that are disproportionately impacted by HIV and AIDS) and met with community advocates and health experts to discuss grassroots strategies for addressing the disease in communities of color.
- ***Helped Pass H.R. 2 “SGR Compromise” (March 2015):*** Congresswoman Kelly supported passage of legislation providing an additional two years of funding for home visiting programs, family-to-family information centers, and community health centers.



- ***Introduced Community Oral Health Legislation (HR 539,) and embarked on Oral Health Tour of Chicago:*** In January, Dr. Kelly introduced bipartisan legislation with Congressman Mike Simpson of Idaho to provide oral health grants to qualifying organizations that support community activities to improve oral health education and dental disease prevention. **The Action for Dental Health Act currently has 49 bipartisan cosponsors.**

In February, Congresswoman Kelly visited the Roseland Community Hospital Dental Van where she met with oral health professionals at the Women, Infant, and Children's Center as babies and toddlers got their first dental exam.

MID-YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

April 2015: Health Braintrust



In April, Congresswoman Kelly – in tandem with the National Minority Quality Forum – hosted the **Congressional Black Caucus’ 2015 Spring Health Braintrust**. There, medical and public health experts engaged in a series of panel discussions regarding health issues that disproportionately affect the African American community. The solution-oriented conversations that took place during this conference centered on finding ways to reshape health policy and better respond to the public health concerns of vulnerable communities.

Over the course of the two day summit, numerous public health concerns were examined including: Hepatitis-C and HIV, diabetes-related hospitalizations, hypertension, clinical trials, gun violence as a public health threat, multiple sclerosis, and breast and cervical cancers in biodiverse communities. Additionally, the Health Braintrust led a Biodiversity Health Policy Luncheon and Award Ceremony, where House Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) was awarded the Congressional Leadership Award for his leadership on health issues. The University Hospitals was presented with the 2015 Booker T. Washington Award for its innovative solutions for community health in Cleveland, Ohio, and U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy was the keynote speaker of the Health Braintrust, and was presented with the Charles Richard Drew Award.

The Spring Health Braintrust concluded with the 2015 Leadership Awards Dinner where the Honorable James Clyburn (D-GA) was given a Lifetime Achievement Award for his notable years of leadership and work in addressing health equality.

In all, 500 participants attended this year’s Spring Health Braintrust, and the event featured a total of 15 panels during the two days of programming.

May 2015: California HIV/AIDS Awareness Tour

In May, Congresswoman Kelly conducted a five-day tour of minority communities in California to discuss grassroots strategies for addressing HIV/AIDS among people of color.

Kelly visited the Los Angeles district of Congresswoman Maxine Waters and the Oakland district of Congresswoman Barbara Lee, meeting AIDS advocates, activists, and health professionals to outline ways the Health Braintrust can work with communities and medical innovators to combat HIV/AIDS.

“From the data we know that the African American community is the group most at risk of developing several potentially fatal diseases, including HIV and AIDS. There are many of reasons for this – including higher concentrations of poverty and adverse social conditions – but that doesn’t mean that we should accept the status quo,” Kelly said. “As Health Braintrust Chair, it my duty to meet with the people on the ground impacted by this disease and use their experience to inform innovative 21st century strategies to eradicate this disease.”

In Los Angeles, Kelly and Waters visited a mobile HIV testing unit at the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science and the OASIS clinic, which provides free rapid HIV testing services. The pair also spoke on a panel entitled “HIV/AIDS in the Black Community” with local AIDS advocates.



As part of her HIV/AIDS Awareness tour, in May Congresswoman Kelly paid a visit to Oakland, CA where she met with Rep. Barbara Lee and representatives from Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD) a nonprofit organization that provides support to women and girls living with HIV.

Almost 20 years after first declaring "A local State of Emergency due to the AIDS epidemic," the city of Oakland continues to be disproportionately impacted by the disease. While in the East Bay, Kelly and Lee met with Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD) – a nonprofit organization that provides support to women and girls living with HIV.

“It was an honor to welcome Congresswoman Kelly, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Health Braintrust, to the East Bay. As chair of the Brain Trust, Congresswoman Kelly leads the CBC’s efforts to address health issues and disparities, especially those disproportionately affecting the African American community,” said Congresswoman Lee. “During her visit, I was proud to show her firsthand the important work being done by Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Diseases (WORLD), which services women living with or at risk for HIV/AIDS. Sadly, one in thirty-two African American women will be diagnosed with HIV in their lifetime. WORLD and other organization are on the frontline working to address this health issue and move us one step closer to an AIDS-free generation.”

The Health Braintrust will conduct periodic tours of communities across the country to raise awareness of minority health disparities.

July 2015: First Ever Health Braintrust Website Goes Live



Robin Kelly
CHAIR

Congresswoman Robin Kelly is chair of the Congressional Black Caucus' Health Braintrust, the authority on African American and minority health policy on Capitol Hill. In this role, she serves as the CBC's principal healthcare advisor and is responsible for advancing the Caucus' health priorities, which include promoting health equity and reducing health disparities in all communities.

Kelly was elected to represent Illinois' 2nd Congressional District on April 9, 2013. Since then, she has worked to improve access to quality healthcare and promote healthier lifestyles in multicultural communities, including drafting legislation to provide dental care in underserved areas as well as legislation to address gun violence as a public health epidemic as a means of reducing gun-related deaths.

As CBC Health Braintrust Chair, Kelly is working to promote legislative and policy solutions to minority health disparities with the overarching goal of achieving health equity in a generation.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

Fall 2015: Kelly Report on Health Disparities

In September Congresswoman Kelly will be releasing a comprehensive report on Health Disparities in America. **“The Kelly Report on Health Disparities.”**

This is the second installment of a series of comprehensive reports that the Congresswoman is putting together following up on last years “Kelly Report on Gun Violence in America.”

The aim of this year’s report – as was the case with last years – is to examine the root causes and impact of health disparities in America and to provide a comprehensive set of legislative and policy recommendations to reverse them.

In addition to featuring commentaries from key Congressional leaders and thought leaders in the public health space, the Kelly Report has reports covering:

- **Cardiovascular Disease**
- **Childhood Asthma**
- **Child Nutrition**
- **Colorectal Cancer**
- **Diabetes**
- **The Diversity Pipeline in Medicine**
- **Health IT & 21st Century Cures**
- **HIV/AIDS**
- **Lupus**
- **Mental Health Disorders**
- **Oral Health**
- **Viral Hepatitis**



Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL) with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and gun safety advocates during the release of the 2014 Kelly Report on Gun Violence in America.

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

2015 CBC
Health
Braintrust
Outreach



Communities Visited

Durham, NC (Kidney Disease)
Chicago, IL (Community Health)
Los Angeles, CA (HIV/AIDS)
Oakland, CA (HIV/AIDS)
Denver, CO (Men's Health)



Legislation Supported

HR 2 (Medicare/CHIP) Reauth
HR 539 (Action for Dental Health Act)
HR 592 Pharmacy in Medically Underserved Enhancement Act

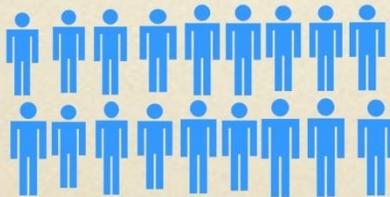
Congresswoman has heavily utilized social media to engage communities on the Braintrusts activities

facebook



8,000 followers

You Tube



18,000 viewers

twitter



2,000 followers

PRESS CLIPS

How to Reduce Health Disparities, Unite Physician Efforts: Rep. Robin Kelly

6/7/2015, 3:32 PM

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Leveraging strategic partnerships will empower physicians and medical students to close the nation's health care equity gap, Rep. Robin Kelly, D-Ill., said Friday during an address at the [2015 AMA Annual Meeting](#).

Her remarks were part of a special reception to honor recipients of the 2015 AMA Minority Scholars Award, which gives 10,000 scholarships to exceptional students of color. The reception was hosted by the AMA Minority Affairs Section and the AMA Foundation.



Kelly (pictured right) is the chair of the [Congressional Black Caucus \(CBC\) Health Braintrust](#), which aims to advance African-American health and communities by developing leaders, informing policy and educating the public.

During her address, Kelly reminded this year's scholars that as promising physicians in training, they hold an important role in the nation's fight to reduce health disparities.

"The theme for [our caucus] this Congress is 'The March Toward Health Equity,' in honor of the 50th anniversary of the voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery," Kelly said.

She quoted a statement by Martin Luther King, Jr.: 'Of all the forms of inequality, injustices in health care are the most shocking and inhumane.' I couldn't agree more Like the right to vote, health care is a fundamental civil right that must be promoted, protected and supported. Your zip code, ethnicity and bank balance shouldn't determine your health."

This is precisely why the CBC Health Braintrust has developed key initiatives to help defend patients' access to care and improve health outcomes in at-risk communities, Kelly said. These initiatives include:

- Calling on Congress to commission a greater body of research on social factors and determinants that impact health care.
- Increasing engagement among health policy experts, community advocates and elected officials to discuss strategies for improving health outcomes in vulnerable communities.
- Continuing the CBC Health Braintrust's national tour to spotlight key health issues affecting multicultural communities.
- Introducing health legislation that addresses pressing national health concerns while "keeping health equity and disparity reduction at the forefront of the national agenda," Kelly said. "In particular, I'm gearing up to introduce the 2016 Health Equity and Accountability Act ... Congress' signature health disparities legislation."
- Releasing the 2015 Kelly Report on Health Equity in America, an official congressional report examining the root causes and impact of health disparities in America. The report, to be released in September, also will provide a comprehensive set of legislative and policy recommendations to reverse these issues.

"With these steps, we begin the march toward a healthier future, laying the foundation for achieving health equity in a generation And I'm enlisting all of you in that pursuit," she said.

Congresswomen Waters, Robin Kelly, and Local Activists Discuss HIV/AIDS and the Black Community

By Sentinel News Service

Published May 14, 2015



Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43)

On Saturday, May 2, Congresswoman Maxine Waters (CA-43) welcomed Congresswoman Robin Kelly (IL-2) to Los Angeles to a discussion of “HIV/AIDS and the Black Community,” at an event at Charles R. Drew University. Congresswoman Kelly, one of the newest Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), has been selected to lead the CBC’s Health Braintrust, which works to address health disparities and improve health outcomes for all Americans. In this capacity, Congresswoman Kelly has made HIV/AIDS one of her top priorities.

“I was delighted that my colleague, Congresswoman Robin Kelly, the new chair of the CBC’s Health Braintrust, wanted to hear from experts and activists in the field in Los Angeles about where we are in the fight against HIV/AIDS,” said Congresswoman Waters.

“The Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust is committed to closing the disparities gap for infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS,” said Congresswoman Kelly. “As the Health Braintrust Chair, I’m working to reach communities across the country to learn about their unique challenges in combating the disease. Thank you to Congresswoman Waters for hosting us and bringing together such a dynamic group of stakeholders who are on the front lines in the fight against HIV/AIDS. I look forward to continuing to work with her to develop legislative and policy strategies to promote and support community efforts to eradicate HIV/AIDS.”



The event was greeted and welcomed to Charles R. Drew University by President David Carlisle and featured a panel of distinguished experts, led by Dr. Wilbert Jordan, founder and director of the Oasis Clinic at Charles R. Drew University, a 35-year veteran in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Panelists included Carrie Broadus, resident advisor for Los Angeles Metropolitan Churches and former executive director of the Women Alive Coalition, considered one of the nation's leading authorities and advocates on issues facing women living with HIV; Dr. Nina Harawa, Adjunct Associate Professor with the UCLA Geffen Schools of Medicine and Public Health, and Associate Professor at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, trained in epidemiology; Dr. Cleo Manago, CEO/President of AmASSI National Health Systems and a behavioral health specialist; Dr. Orlando Pile, Chief of Communicable Diseases at the L.A. County Sheriff's Department; Mr. Tony Wafford, President and CEO of I Choose Life Health and Wellness Center, an organization founded to address health disparities in the Black community; and Vallerie D. Wagner, COO of AIDS Project L.A. Health & Wellness, a federally qualified health center with locations throughout L.A. County. The audience was composed of many longtime HIV/AIDS activists and advocates from medical facilities, religious institutions, universities, civil rights organizations and non-profits.



Panelists presented sobering statistics that demonstrate the continuing threat of HIV/AIDS throughout the United States and its disproportionate impact on African Americans. For example, in 2011, out of the more than 1.2 million Americans with HIV, only 86% knew they were infected, and only 37% were receiving medical treatment. Furthermore, in 2013, 45% of diagnoses of HIV infection among adults and adolescents were in African Americans.

Following the panel presentations, panelists and participants engaged in a spirited discussion. Among the topics discussed was the Minority AIDS Initiative, which Congresswoman Waters established in 1998 to target HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and treatment funds to minority communities. Participants agreed on the need for increased funding for the initiative, as well as greater accountability, so as to ensure that the funds are actually used in minority communities and in ways that benefit minority patients and individuals at risk in these communities.

The program concluded with a visit to the Oasis Clinic, where many Angelinos living with HIV/AIDS receive treatment. The visit was led by Dr. Jordan.



“As we return to Washington, Congresswoman Kelly and I will fight to secure the necessary support and resources for minority communities – like the Black community here in Los Angeles County – to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide life-prolonging treatment to individuals who have already been infected by this terrible disease,” said Congresswoman Waters.

Reps. Robin Kelly and Mike Simpson join forces on oral care for low-income Americans

By [Reading on Walden Bookstore](#)



Rep. Robin Kelly (left) and Rep. Mike Simpson (right) have teamed up to support The Action for Dental Health Act of 2015, H.R. 539, would authorize Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grants to support volunteer dental projects.

The American Dental Association's (ADA) Action for Dental Health, U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Ill.) and U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) have one thing in common and a strong bond: a desire to improve dental health and especially the dental health of underserved, low-income Americans. The [ADA reported](#) that Rep. Kelly introduced a bill this past week, H.R. 539, to support those efforts nationwide. H.R. 539 is titled the Action for Dental Health Act of 2015 and was introduced by Rep. Kelly, and co-sponsored by Rep. Simpson as the lead Republican cosponsor. Rep. Simpson is a dentist, one of two sitting members in the House of Representatives who are also dentists.

This legislation will target crucial federal dollars to state and local dental organizations to provide proven oral health care services in a manner that effectively addresses the barriers to dental care many Americans face. This bill would have a significant impact on many underserved communities.

“Regular visits to the dentist do more than keep your smile attractive – they can tell a lot about your overall health, including whether or not you may be developing a disease like diabetes or if you’re at risk for a stroke,” said Rep. Kelly. “Our bill helps to create healthier communities by breaking down barriers to oral healthcare and will ultimately help reduce unnecessary healthcare costs by minimizing and eliminating dental diseases in their early stages.”

“Early diagnosis, intervention and preventive treatments can stop the progress of most oral diseases,” said Rep. Simpson. “Not only do individuals often suffer from severe pain, but it also adds unnecessary costs to the health care delivery system, costs that could have been minimized or eliminated had the disease been caught in its early stages.”

H.R. 539 redirects existing federal dollars to initiatives that have a real impact on dental access disparities. The bill includes programs that reduce the number of people who visit emergency rooms by diverting them to private dental practices, where in some cases they can repay the cost of their care with community service activities, expansion of care in nursing homes and for the elderly, support of charitable organizations, improving collaboration with health professionals, and several other provisions.

Bipartisanship when it comes to the dental health of all Americans is the driving force behind this piece of legislation, with the two leading sponsors from opposite ends of the political spectrum. However, both Reps. Kelly and Simpson have been noted for their "working across the aisle."

Last April, Rep. Kelly introduced H.R. 4395. At the time in a letter to her Congressional colleagues, she said, "More than 47 million people in the U.S. live in places with limited access to dental care, according to the Federal Health Resources and Services Administration. And, low-income adults are almost twice as likely as those with higher incomes to have had no dental care in the previous year."

Kelly added, "Poor dental health can also be an obstacle to employment as many Americans with dental issues find it challenging to land jobs that require them to interact socially with the public, often because they lack the basic ability to smile readily, communicate confidently or chew properly."

The bill takes its name from the American Dental Association's (ADA) Action for Dental Health, a nationwide, community-based movement to deliver care now to people already suffering with dental disease, strengthen and expand the public/private safety net, and bring dental health education and disease prevention into underserved communities. The bill would authorize Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grants to support volunteer dental projects and collaborative initiatives.

According to the American Dental Association, this bill funds two federal grant programs. The first would provide \$10 million annually to qualified state and local organizations offering free dental services for underserved populations. The second program would provide \$10 million annually to organizations implementing Action for Dental Health initiatives that reduce the barriers to care. Both grants are limited to five fiscal years after enactment.

"We're delighted that these bipartisan members of Congress understand the need for action and are supporting us in this ambitious undertaking," said ADA President Dr. Maxine Feinberg. "Dentists across the country are taking up this challenge with renewed determination. But we can't do this alone. We need everyone with a stake in a healthier nation to join us."

The Action for Dental Health Act will allow organizations to qualify for HHS oral health grants to support activities that improve oral health education and dental disease prevention, including developing and expanding outreach programs that will facilitate establishing dental homes for children and adults, including the elderly, blind and disabled.

"This bill adds no additional burden to taxpayers," said Dr. Feinberg. "Rather, it will redirect existing resources to the kinds of programs that are already proven to reduce and eliminate the barriers that prevent millions of Americans from achieving good oral health."

The bill would support the types of initiatives identified by the ADA as having the greatest impact on dental access disparities, including:

Reducing the number of people who visit the emergency room for dental conditions, by referring them to community health centers or private dental practices, where they can receive proper dental care;

Expanding access to care for the vulnerable elderly in nursing homes;

Supporting charitable programs like Give Kids A Smile and Missions of Mercy, through which directly provide care to disadvantaged children and adults who are suffering from lack of dental care today;

Ensuring more Americans have access to drinking water with fluoride; and
strengthening collaborations with other health professionals and organizations.

Dr. Feinberg pledged the ADA's full effort to build support for and ultimately pass this bill.

"Representatives Kelly and Simpson are stepping up for the nation's oral health," said Dr. Feinberg. "The 158,000 members of the American Dental Association will do everything possible to help them pass this bill into law."