ADVANCED EDUCATION IN GENERAL DENTISTRY PROGRAM
at Wichita State University

PROJECT SUMMARY

Kansans’ universal access to oral health care remains an unmet need. Oral disease restricts school, work and home activities, and significantly diminishes quality-of-life, especially for uninsured and underserved populations. The AEGD, Kansas’ only dental education program, significantly impacts oral health care by increasing oral health care access and workforce, and by serving as a focus for much-needed education and training programs.

A new AEGD clinical building will extend the care available through the Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation Dental Hygiene Clinic at WSU beyond oral hygiene and preventive care to include primary dental care, pediatric dentistry, implants and full mouth rehabilitation, orthodontics and advanced clinical techniques. These services will be available for traditional patients, patients who are medically compromised by, e.g., HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and geriatric disorders, and to uninsured, under-insured and underserved patients.

The AEGD program is targeted to accept its first class of four to six dental residents in August 2009.

NEEDS DESCRIPTION

Access to oral health care for many rural and low-income Kansans remains an unmet need and unfulfilled promise. A recent resolution in the Kansas State Legislature noted that the burden of oral disease restricts activities in school, work and home and often significantly diminishes the quality of life by causing poor diet and nutrition, sleep disturbances, depression and impaired social interactions. Further, the resolution noted the enormous cost of acute dental conditions in terms of missed days of work and school each year.

The majority of Kansas counties (84) along with the cities of Topeka and Wichita are designated as “Health Professions Shortage Areas” for dentistry by the federal government’s Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). According to HRSA’s Health Work Force Profile (1991–1998), the number of dentists in Kansas declined, while the state’s population increased. At the end of the decade, the state’s dentist-to-population ratio, an important measure of access, had declined by 13 percent. Kansas trails both the regional and national workforce averages with just more than 1,000 professionally active dentists for the entire state.

This trend is accelerating as the dental workforce is aging and fewer dentists are entering the profession in Kansas. In 2003, 37 percent of Kansas dentists were over 55 years old, with 17 percent of all dentists aged 65 years or more. However, only 11 percent of Kansas dentists are under 35 years old. Kansas faces the situation where hundreds of dentists are approaching retirement, and there is no mechanism to replace them.

Unless something systematic and immediate is done to intervene in this process, the state faces an oral health crisis situation defined by a dwindling supply of dentists resulting in diminished access to care for all Kansans with a disproportionate burden on inner-city and rural populations. This will result in increased morbidity and suffering for the citizens of Kansas. In order to meet its oral health care access and dental work force needs, the state of Kansas must succeed in accomplishing two goals:

1. Increase the number of dental graduates choosing to practice dentistry in Kansas.
2. Increase the number of dental graduates choosing to practice in under-served areas of Kansas.

This AEGD Dental Residency program will be instrumental in achieving these goals and a building in which to conduct the training is essential.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The AEGD program will open with four to six residents as a one-year post-doctoral education experience with an optional second year. Multiple studies suggest that health care providers tend to practice where they train, and it is anticipated that residents recruited to Kansas for their training will permanently join the state oral health workforce. As soon as feasible, the program will expand to 10 residents per year and transition to a two-year program. First-year residents will train at WSU’s main dental clinic, located near the WSU Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex at 29th and Oliver, with clinical rotations to GraceMed Health Clinic and the Robert Dole Veteran’s Administration. Second-year residents will rotate to clinical sites throughout the State of Kansas, emphasizing western Kansas sites. Additionally, visionary planning includes establishing a pediatric dentistry program to address the needs of children and patients with special needs.

ACTIVITIES

This AEGD program will increase the resident's knowledge of oral and systemic interrelationships and manifestations in both healthy individuals and in those with abnormalities and diseases. The program will broaden clinical experiences and prepare trainees to manage the oral health of a wide range of patients.

Training is provided in all phases of General Dentistry including Pediatrics, Orthodontics, Periodontics, Operative/Restorative Dentistry, Endodontics, Prosthodontics, Implantology, Oral Surgery, Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology, Patient Management, Practice Management, Conscious Sedation and Risk Management. The curriculum includes weekly treatment planning conferences, monthly literature review meetings, seminars in, e.g., general dentistry and peer review, as well as participation in formal coursework/classes. Regular Continuing Dental Education Courses are a vital part of our comprehensive curriculum.

Clinical service will provide approximately 2,000 visits per resident per year and will include pediatric dentistry, oral surgery, anesthesiology, orthodontics and community outreach clinics to supplement the comprehensive dentistry in the AEGD Clinic. Additionally, the AEGD program will be involved in community health fairs, dental leadership seminars, pre-dental club sponsorship, “Give a Kid a Smile Day” and the Kansas Mission of Mercy.

BUDGET

The total cost of the building and equipment to support the AEGD program is $6.6 million. The land has been provided by the University and the remainder of the funds required for the building and equipment will be secured from private sources. Delta Dental of Kansas and the Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation have committed $3 million toward construction costs.

LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERS

The program fits well with the university’s urban-serving mission as well as its commitment to maintaining the health of Kansans. The program is housed in the WSU College of Health Professions. The program is headed by Dexter A. Woods, DDS, who has an extensive career in both dental education and clinical dentistry while serving as a Major in the U.S. Air Force Dental Corp. He was director of Howard University's AEGD program prior to joining WSU.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) funding requires that monies pass through an administering hospital. Via Christi Regional Medical Center has joined together with WSU to serve as the hospital base. Multiple community organizations such as GraceMed Health Clinic, Sedgwick County Children’s Clinic and the Robert Dole Veteran’s Administration Medical Center are affiliating with the program in order to address the large and diverse patient population in need of clinical care.

For information about the AEGD program, contact Dexter Woods, director of Advanced Education in General Dentistry, at (316) 978-5660 or dexter.woods@wichita.edu. To learn how you can support this program and its new building, contact Lynette Murphy, WSU Foundation director of development for the WSU College of Health Professions, at (316) 978-3441 or lynette.murphy@wichita.edu.