

# Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residence Program RFP

June 2005

## What is the Request for Proposal (RFP)?

On behalf of *Oral Health Kansas, Inc.*, Sedgwick County is issuing a Request for Proposals to perform a feasibility study of the concept of creating an Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) Residency program in Wichita. The goals of such a program would be to increase the oral health care workforce for the state of Kansas and to increase access to oral health care by currently underserved populations. The feasibility study is to determine what it would take (money, facilities, faculty, etc.) to have a quality AEGD program that would meet these goals.

## What is the background of the AEGD?

In 2000, the U.S. Surgeon General issued the first-ever report on the nation's oral health, calling it a "silent epidemic." The report served as a wake-up call to recognize the relationship between oral health and general health and to recognize that many Americans do not practice good oral hygiene or have adequate access to dental services.

In 2003, *Oral Health Kansas, Inc.* formed to coordinate and focus efforts to improve the oral health status of Kansans, especially those in low-income and rural areas. Its priorities are to increase the supply of dentists and dental hygienists, increase the supply of oral health care services, and improve data monitoring and reporting.

## Why the focus on Oral Health?

A study published in January 2005 by the Kansas Health Institute (KHI) revealed the declining supply of dental services in Kansas. KHI reported that the ratio of dentists to the total population is projected to fall steadily through the year 2045. Access to services is greatly diminished for lower-income families, less educated families, racial and ethnic minorities, and for rural areas of the state. The "Smiles Across Kansas 2004: The Oral Health of Kansas Children" report published in March 2005 by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment showed that Kansas  
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lags behind many states and is far from meeting national "Healthy People 2010" goals for oral health in children.

## Is an AEGD Residency a good idea?

A general dentistry residency program is one idea among many ideas to address the oral health needs of Kansans. Some ideas currently being explored by other members of *Oral Health Kansas, Inc.* include revolving loans for beginning dental practitioners, incentives to locate in underserved areas, and ways to get more Kansans to enroll in existing dental education programs. We will know if an AEGD program is a good idea after the results of the feasibility study are received and the risks and rewards are known.

## Is this a dental school?

No, an AEGD residency is not a dental school. After completing the educational program at a dental school (there are no dental schools in Kansas), graduates have the option of practicing dentistry or pursuing an advanced degree. An AEGD residency is one example of an advanced degree available to such graduates. According to the American Dental Education Association, most graduates immediately enter private practice (50.4% in 2004) or pursue advanced education (38.6%).

## What are the next steps?

Proposals are due July 12, 2005, at which time *Oral Health Kansas, Inc.* will review the proposals, interview selected firms, and make a selection decision. Costs and funding will not be known until this time. Participating in this project are the Kansas Dental Association, Delta Dental Foundation of Kansas, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and several other organizations.



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