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July 18, 2005

Government Oversight Committee
State Capitol
Des Moines IA 50319

Re: Impact of New Outreach Dental Clinic

Dear Members of the Government Oversight Committee:

The following information is provided in response to your request of July 8 for an update on actions the College has taken to resolve concerns regarding the new Oral Surgery Clinic in Coralville. Dean David Johnsen from the University of Iowa College of Dentistry provided the following information.

Similar issues were raised in a January 21, 2005, letter from area dentists regarding the Oral Surgery Community Training Site. When Collegiate administrators learned of these concerns, they sent a set of information points to area dentists (see attachment). Dean Johnsen followed up by contacting the President of the Johnson County Dental Society and officers in the local dental societies to arrange a meeting. The meeting was well attended, and discussion allowed for a candid exchange of issues and concerns. The two central issues concerned a perceived threat to the livelihoods of the current practitioners and future plans for the College to meet its educational mission.

The College has no plans for other similar community training sites in other disciplines because they believe that oral surgery has a particular set of circumstances different from other disciplines. The College staff indicate that, based upon a careful review, they do not believe that this clinic will pose a significant threat to area dentists' current operations. Currently, the College has over 50 adjunct faculty with whom they consult regularly and who have made significant contributions to this discussion.

Dean Johnsen indicates that the marked decline in oral surgery departments (particularly loss of faculty) at other Big Ten dental schools is of serious concern. He believes that if this were to happen to the UI's program, the College would suffer a loss of faculty and subsequent decline in academic quality of the oral surgery component of its DDS (predoctoral) program. This would result in the decline in the UI residency program as well as a reduction in the College's ability to deliver care to the underserved. The excellent Collegiate faculty and staff currently deliver over two million dollars in uncompensated or reduced cost care. Without a balance in its patient pool, the College will not be able to keep top faculty. In summary, the community training site is intended to retain oral surgery faculty, to minimize threatening the livelihoods of current practitioners, and to keep the scope of the program as it is now.

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Behind all this is a growing need and demand for dentists in most of Iowa with shortages in many areas. Johnson County is the exception, and College staff will continue to work as closely as possible with area dentists. But the combination of the growing need for dentists in most of Iowa, the maldistribution of dentists, the need for patients for high quality training programs, and the high number of dentists in Johnson County relative to population is an environment that may foster some tension even with concerted and diligent work on all sides.

The College of Dentistry is proud of its record in providing training to almost 80% of dentists in Iowa in almost all counties delivering over $500 million in dental care to Iowans. The Dean and other collegiate administrations indicate their willingness to cooperate in an ongoing dialogue with the Legislative Oversight Committee members and staff as plans for the Clinic proceed.

If you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Nichols

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cc: Attachment
Legislative Liaisons
Legislative Log

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

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Community Based Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Training Site
University of Iowa College of Dentistry

Frequently asked Questions and Responses:

1. **Why did you open this community training site?**
   Response: To meet our founding mission to train and educate dentists, we need enough patients for our predoctoral (DDS) program, small high quality residency programs and faculty to practice in the current model (ongoing for 20+ years). We have watched with alarm the decline of almost all Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS) departments in this part of the country. We see the community training site as a way to preserve our status quo in patient mix and flow to fulfill our mission.

2. **Are you planning any other comparable community training sites in other clinical disciplines?**
   Response: No. There have been no discussions, meetings, or plans for a comparable community training site in any other discipline.

3. **How will the clinic be funded?**
   Response: The costs associated with the clinic will be funded from OMS patient care receipts and no state funds will be used.

4. **Besides supporting the OMS residency program, did other factors contribute to the decision to establish a community training site?**
   Response: Yes. To have a strong program to train predoctoral (DDS) students suitable for Iowa, we need a strong department of OMS. We see the predoctoral, residency and faculty components in this and all departments as linked with each other to strengthen all three and keep us a top dental school.

5. **Will there be ongoing discussions of this and related issues?**
   Response: Yes. Any new program makes adjustments in operations and communications. Dr. Kirk Fridrich and Dr. David Johnsen will be on the program at the February meeting of the Johnson County Dental Society. We hope to have a wider discussion there. We invite your input. We will be communicating with other groups as well.