

Laura,

At the October 31, 2007 meeting of the Prosthodontic Forum the following motion was unanimously approved:

that the Prosthodontic Forum is committed to the concept that dental school faculty and discipline/specialty organizations be a formal and systematic component of the maintenance and evolution of Pre-doctoral accreditation standards to promote excellence in oral health education.

As an Action Item, the Chair was instructed to write to the ADA and request that the members of the Prosthodontic Forum be identified as a community of interest and have competencies sent to all members for review and feedback. I have attached an Excel file with the contact information of the Forum Presidents as well as a who we are doc.

Since last year we have grown to 16 organizations that represent over 23,000 dentists and laboratory technologists and are concerned with the state of pre-doctoral education. While the Forum is interested in all educational standards that impact pre-doctoral education, as Prosthodontic discipline organizations, we have particular interest in promoting excellence in prosthodontics.

I have enclosed some background data that was discussed at our meeting.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

All the best,

Gary

Chair, Prosthodontic Forum

PROSTHODONTICS – The Dental School Dilemma:

Limited access to prosthodontic services is becoming a real and growing threat for aging Americans. Research shows that population growth among the primary age groups requiring prosthodontic services is expected to increase significantly over the next 30 years. In 1991, 33.6 million people in the United States required complete dentures; that number will escalate to 37.9 million adults in 2020.¹

In 2000, 12.4% of the U.S. population was 65 years of age or older. This number will increase to 16% by 2020 and 21% by 2050.² The fastest growing segment of the population is the over 85 group. There were 5 million seniors over 85 in 2005 and the number is expected to reach 20 million by 2050². The growth of this age group will generate a substantial increase in demand for fixed, implant and removable prosthodontics. Greater than 40% of those over 65 are completely edentulous.

There are currently 178 million partially edentulous Americans. Public Health data and experts (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey data, Douglass¹) tell us that the number of partially edentulous (missing one or more teeth) patients will continue to increase over the next 15 years to more than 200 million individuals. Partial edentulism affects the majority of adult Americans and as a result the need for fixed and removable partial prosthodontic care will increase.

Services included those supplied by General Practitioners and Prosthodontic specialists were calculated using the percent time the average GP spends doing fixed and removable partial prosthodontic care services, as well as all specialist care.

Actual Need in 2005	535 million hours
2010	563 million
2020	610 million hours

Unmet Need will increase from 488 million hours in 2005 to 560 million.³ This is a significant issue that will impact the quality of life for many Americans.

Over the past 20 years, prosthodontics - as a practiced specialty and as a discipline area in our dental schools - has been steadily declining. Although many of the basic tenets of the rapidly emerging treatment areas of esthetic and implant dentistry depend on a thorough knowledge of basic prosthodontic concepts, many dental schools have reduced, and in some cases altogether eliminated, prosthodontic experiences and requirements for

¹ Source: Douglas CW, et al Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry 2002:87:5-8.

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau

³ Source: Douglas, CW, et al: Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry 2002:87:9-14.

graduation. Dental schools' pre-doctoral programs across the country have experienced a marked decrease in curriculum hours in prosthodontics.

Undergraduate students now have limited exposure to prosthodontic knowledge and techniques, resulting in a lack of experience and clinical competency in these important skill areas. At the Second ADEA Advanced Dental Education Summit, held on December 7-9 2006, the educators present lamented the clinical experience of current graduates and passed a resolution requiring a mandatory PGY-1 for licensure. The decline in the knowledge and practice of prosthodontics adversely affects not only the future of the discipline and its place in dental schools and dentistry as a whole, but also the rising number of patients requiring this type of care. If this decline continues, millions of Americans will feel the effects of the shortage of trained practitioners, leaving needs for prosthodontic procedures unmet.

This impending shortage will have the biggest effect on our most vulnerable aging population and their quality of life.