

## **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

### **Between the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Board of Governors Focusing on Florida's Most Pressing Dental Care Issues**

Many individuals in Florida, especially disadvantaged persons, are not receiving basic oral healthcare because of inadequate utilization and/or the lack of convenient access to available care.<sup>1</sup> Florida's dentists disproportionately are located in the more populous areas of the state, particularly the coastal counties in southern Florida.<sup>2</sup> In addition, minority population groups are under-represented in the dental workforce within Florida.<sup>1,2</sup> This Memorandum of Understanding, jointly supported by the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Board of Governors, is designed to focus on the most immediate and cost-effective ways to address these most critical problems.

#### **The Understanding**

The understanding agreed to by the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Board of Governors is to jointly seek support from the Florida Legislature for any programs or initiatives that would directly address increasing the number of dentists practicing in underserved, primarily rural, geographic areas of Florida, and increasing the number of under-represented minority populations in the dental workforce. Such programs or initiatives include but are not limited to<sup>1</sup>:

- Creating new or supporting existing programs that provide loan forgiveness in exchange for working in geographically underserved areas of Florida.
- Creating pipeline programs that would increase the flow of qualified under-represented minority populations into Florida's existing dental schools.
- Improving and supporting robust data collection and analysis of information regarding dental workforce, oral healthcare needs, and disadvantaged populations.
- Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates and reducing disincentives for dentists to become Medicaid providers.

- Increasing the pay and improving the work environment for state-employed dental providers serving patients in public health settings.
- Expanding community-based oral health and oral disease-preventive services to geographical areas of Florida where they currently do not exist.
- Expanding oral health education and oral disease-preventive programs in pre-K through high school.
- Providing technical assistance and support to communities wishing to recruit dental providers through the construction or equipping of dental office space in exchange for provision of dental services.

#### References

<sup>1</sup>Florida Department of Health. Health Practitioner Oral Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee Report. February 2009. Available at: [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/OralHealthcareWorkforce/200903Dental\\_Workforce\\_Report.pdf](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/OralHealthcareWorkforce/200903Dental_Workforce_Report.pdf). Accessed October 12, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Florida Department of Health. Report on the 2009 – 2010 Workforce Survey of Dentists. March 2011. Available at: [http://doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/OralHealthcareWorkforce/2009\\_2010\\_Workforce\\_Survey\\_Dentists\\_Report.pdf](http://doh.state.fl.us/Family/dental/OralHealthcareWorkforce/2009_2010_Workforce_Survey_Dentists_Report.pdf). Accessed October 12, 2011.

This Memorandum is jointly signed by the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Board of Governors.

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Frank T. Brogan, Chancellor  
Florida Board of Governors

(Dated)

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H. Frank Farmer, Jr., MD, PhD, FACP  
State Surgeon General  
Florida Department of Health  
(Dated)