



New AEGD Program to Focus on Serving the Vulnerable

PENN DENTAL MEDICINE has plans to launch an innovative postdoctoral training program in general dentistry designed to educate dental residents in primary dental care for vulnerable and underserved patients. The School has been awarded \$2.1 million over five years from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in support of this new Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) program.

“This new program builds on our ongoing efforts at Penn Dental Medicine to address persistent health disparities and difficulties in accessing oral health care for vulnerable and underserved patients in Philadelphia,” says Dr. David Hershkowitz, Division Chief of Restorative Dentistry at Penn Dental Medicine and Principal Investigator on the HRSA grant. “It is our plan that program graduates will receive advanced knowledge, skills, and experiences to best serve these populations.”

Dental residents in the AEGD program are anticipated to be placed in two of the School’s community-based sites — Penn Dental Medicine at Sayre, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) where the School has a four-chair dental care center; and Penn Dental

Medicine at Puentes de Salud, serving the Latino immigrant community, where Penn Dental Medicine provides primary dental care within a three-chair facility.

Dental residents will also complete clinical dental care within Penn Dental Medicine’s soon-to-open Care Center for Persons with Disabilities (see story, p. 2), and in the School’s clinical dental program for Survivors of Torture in partnership with Philadelphia’s Nationalities Service Center.

“Through Penn Dental Medicine’s substantial ongoing investment in treating vulnerable populations, we see not only the need for excellent comprehensive dental care, but also the need for advanced training in the delivery of that care,” says Dr. Olivia Sheridan, Professor

of Clinical Restorative Dentistry, who leads the clinical care program for Survivors of Torture and will teach AEGD residents. “This program will provide that care and become a model

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for the advanced education of compassionate dental graduates to enhance their skills and understanding in the care of this population.”

For the first two planning years (July 2020–June 2022), Penn Dental Medicine will develop the program and apply for approval from the Commission on Dental Accreditation. It is anticipated that the first class will begin in July 2022, with four students accepted into the one-year program each year. Dr. Marc Henschel, joining Penn Dental Medicine in January 2021 will be the AEGD Program Director.

“The program will provide knowledge, skills, and clinical experiences in cultural competency and health literacy,” adds Dr. Joan Gluch, Division Chief of Community Oral Health and a member of the program faculty. “We will also be tracking outcomes and develop systems for evaluating program impact regarding both access to care for the vulnerable and underserved and the quality of care received by patients.”

OPPOSITE: Residents in the Advanced Education in General Dentistry program will provide care in a number of the School's community-based sites, including Penn Dental Medicine at Sayre (pictured), a federally qualified health center in West Philadelphia, where the School has a four-chair dental care center.

Master of Oral Health Sciences Program Launches

BUILDING ON ITS ADVANCED DEGREE OPTIONS, Penn Dental Medicine has launched a new master's program, introducing a Master of Oral Health Sciences (MOHS). The new program has two unique tracks — one for college graduates and a second for graduates of non-U.S. dental schools — both with the goal of preparing participants for the successful admissions to dental school.

the coursework is adapted from the first and second years of the dental school curriculum with the program culminating in a capstone project. Along with enhancing academic knowledge in basic and clinical sciences and providing exposure to clinical dental care, the program helps to build communications skills and provides mentoring for the application process and admissions interviews. The track for



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“The MOHS program is specifically designed to provide interim training to those individuals who want to pursue dental school and improve their credentials to more effectively compete for dental school admissions,” says Dr. Esra Sahingur, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Student Research and the MOHS Program Director. “The curriculum exposes candidates to dental school courses and provides exposure to patient care and research.”

Candidates in both tracks rotate within the School's general restorative and specialty clinics and

college graduates also offers guidance in preparing for the Dental Admission Test, while the track for foreign-trained dentists prepares candidates for the National Board Dental Exam and provides mentoring for the various aspects involved in pursuing a successful clinical career.

The MOHS program will welcome the first admissions cohort in July 2021. The MOHS for DMD/DDS candidates will accept up to four students and MOHS for non-U.S. trained dentists will accept up to ten students each year.

ABOVE: Dr. Esra Sahingur, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Student Research, will be the MOHS Program Director.