

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Funded by the Largest Grant in UW School of Dentistry's History...

Washington Dental Service and UW Collaborate on Major Oral Health Research

SEATTLE -- Washington Dental Service, the University of Washington School of Dentistry and the School of Dentistry at Oregon Health Sciences University are partnering in a seven-year research project to expand the evidence base in dentistry.

The studies are funded by two grants — totaling \$22 million — awarded the University of Washington by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), part of the National Institutes of Health. Washington Dental Service, the state's leading dental benefits provider, will be providing 12 years of data on treatments from WDS member dentists as a critical part of the research studies.

“Washington Dental Service is pleased to be playing a major role in this significant practice-based research,” said James D. Dwyer, president and CEO of Washington Dental Service. “Employers will benefit from this collaboration as WDS incorporates the outcomes of this research into our dental plans.”

The grants will establish a 150-dentist network across five states — Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Utah. The network will be called Northwest PRECEDENT, short for the Northwest Practice-based Research Collaborative in Evidence-based Dentistry. The money will also cover the development of a coordinating center to enroll patients in clinical studies through local dentists' offices. Over the seven years, 15-20 clinical studies will be conducted. Research topics will be suggested by the dentists participating in the network.

Dentists in private practice will be involved in developing the research questions, as well as doing all of the clinical treatment. Because the research will include private practitioners in their own offices, adoption of the study's findings should be accelerated.

“One of the unique strengths in our proposal was our relationship with Washington Dental Service researchers and our access to the substantial body of information in the Washington Dental Service dental data warehouse,” said Dr. Timothy DeRouen, the principal investigator and chair of the research network. DeRouen is executive associate dean for research and administrative affairs at the University of Washington School of Dentistry, and professor of biostatistics in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine.

“The significant repository of information on treatment patterns and their effectiveness from the WDS data warehouse will be used to formulate relevant questions, help establish protocols for the studies based on actual treatments and assess the outcomes of different combinations of treatment,” said Dr. Martha Somerman, dean of the UW School of Dentistry.

Washington Dental Service, a founding member of the nationwide Delta Dental Plans Association, is the state’s leading dental insurance company, covering more than 2 million people nationwide through employer-sponsored dental programs. For 50 years, Washington Dental Service has been delivering high-quality, health-centered dental care. For more information, visit the Washington Dental Service Web site at www.DeltaDentalWA.com.