

RESIDENCY PROGRAM IN DENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Division of Public Health, Oral Health Section
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Raleigh, North Carolina

The purpose of the residency is to provide practical experiences for dentists who have completed formal academic training in dental public health. The 12 month, full time program provides an educational opportunity beyond the master's degree level and the opportunity to complete the educational requirements necessary for Board Certification in Dental Public Health.

The North Carolina Oral Health Section has sponsored this training in dental public health since 1965, and is currently one of only a few state or local health departments providing this specialty training. The program is well established as an educational entity within the state dental program. General Statute 130A-11 of the North Carolina Public Health Laws provides for the establishment of a dental public health residency program by the State of North Carolina, which may make it the only state in the Nation required by law to train public health dentists.

The Residency Program is fully accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association [http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/programs/search_advanced_us.asp]. More than forty residents have been trained since 1966. Graduates have gone on to a variety of positions in dental public health within North Carolina and nationally, including roles in local, state and federal government, as well dental education and research.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Residency Program are to train dentists who are qualified to practice dental public health in an array of health care settings, plan and run community-based public health programs and contribute to the scientific basis of public health practice through the conduct of applied public health research in order to improve the oral health of the public. The residency curriculum and activities are guided by the Dental Public Health Competencies¹. The activities of the residency are adapted to the prior experience and interests of the resident.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The Residency Program is offered as a partnership between and supported by resources within the Oral Health Section, Division of Public Health, in the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Because the program is located in the state health department and in one of the largest state dental programs in the country, it provides an excellent array of exposures to the philosophy and practice of dental public health. Considering the scope and comprehensiveness of the state dental program and the cooperative relationships with the extensive resources that exist in North Carolina, an almost unlimited variety of practical training experiences are available. The

¹ Dental Public Health Competencies. *J Public Health Dent* 1998;58:121-122.

state dental program provides an excellent opportunity for designing a residency that is responsive to the individual needs of a dentist interested in public health practice. The state dental program provides experiences in management, health promotion and disease prevention, the delivery of health services, the political process and applied research.

A number of resources are available to dental public health residents on the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill campus, a short drive from the Section's offices in Raleigh. Linkages with the Schools of Public Health and Dentistry and the larger university community provide an avenue to all the resources available on a university campus – faculty, library resources, computer and data management capabilities, academic course work, and a large group of dentists enrolled in masters, doctoral and postdoctoral programs in public health dentistry, epidemiology and health services research.

An Advisory Committee representing a variety of backgrounds and experiences in dental public health serves the dual role of providing guidance to the residency Co-directors and providing advice to residents on their curriculum and performance. The Committee includes dentists with expertise in state and federal practice of dental public health, professors of dentistry and public health, statisticians and health educators. Further, the Committee includes diplomates and a past president of the American Board of Dental Public Health.

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Dentists enter the residency after having completed an MPH or equivalent degree program. The residency is a 12 month, full time program. It runs from September to August, although alternate arrangements may be able to be made. Residents are expected to work a minimum of 224 days, fulfill the educational requirements of the program and follow the personnel guidelines of the Oral Health Section regarding sick leave, holidays, due process and personnel records.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

The North Carolina Dental Public Health Residency Program does not discriminate based on race, sex, color, creed, national origin, age or disability. Residents are selected based on scholarship, experience and leadership potential. Applicants must be graduates of a school of dentistry accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) of the American Dental Association, the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or a school deemed equivalent by the residency directors. The applicant also must have completed at least one academic year in a graduate degree program in an area related to the practice of dental public health, leading to a graduate degree in public health. The advanced education graduate program must include biostatistics, epidemiology, health care policy and management, environmental health and behavioral sciences; and must be accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education at the time the degree is conferred. Alternatively, the applicant may have satisfactorily completed two or more years of advanced education from an institution outside the United States deemed equivalent by the residency directors in an area related to the practice of dental public health including the above content areas. Residents receive a written letter of acceptance once the decision is made that they are to be admitted to the program.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A federally funded stipend is available to support trainees who are U.S. citizens, non-citizen nationals and foreign nationals with permanent residence visas. Because this residency is housed in the state health department, residents are not registered as students at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and the program does not charge tuition or other fees. Residents are provided office space and supplies, and reimbursement for travel within the state and to at least one national meeting. The resident must have access to a vehicle for residency-related travel.

APPLICATION PROCESS

For specific application requirements, please visit the North Carolina Oral Health Section web site at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/partners/Residency.htm> or contact Dr. C. Jean Spratt. We ask that applicants submit all their materials by March 1st of the year in which they wish to enter the residency. However, applications are accepted until the position is filled.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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For more information about the NC Dental Public Health Residency Program, contact:

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