



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 5, 2023

Contact: Michael Orozco
Director of Marketing
(808) 529-9228
morozco@HawaiiDentalService.com

Nathan Hokama
Strategic Communication Solutions
(808) 226-7470
nhokama@scsolutions-hi.com



Heera Chang



Joann Gebauer

Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) Names Heera Chang Dental Director and Promotes Joann Gebauer to Newly Created Position of Professional Relations Director

Honolulu, Hawaii — Hawaii Dental Service (HDS), the state’s leading dental benefits provider, has named Dr. Heera Chang dental director. Prior to joining HDS, she had been an associate surgeon with Oahu Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in Honolulu and Kaneohe.

Dr. Chang, who is a licensed medical doctor and dentist, is the first woman dental director in the company’s 61 years of service. In her new role, she will manage relationships with the dental provider community with a team of HDS dental consultants, and provide clinical and administrative oversight of claims management.

Dr. Chang has a unique blend of experiences in various dental settings, including academia, private practice, community health center, and public health spanning nearly 20 years. She has served as an assistant professor in oral and maxillofacial surgery at Columbia University’s College of Dental Medicine, an oral surgeon with clinics in New York and Massachusetts, a clinical instructor at Waianae Comprehensive Community Health Center, and a public health dentist and an oral surgeon with the Developmental Disabilities Division’s Hospital and Community Dental Services Branch in the Hawaii Department of Health.

“We’re glad to have someone of Dr. Chang’s caliber join the HDS team,” said Dr. Diane Paloma, HDS president and CEO. “Her diverse experience working on the East Coast and in rural underserved areas of Oahu gives her a valuable perspective that will further support the mission of HDS.”



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Dr. Chang received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and earned her dental degree from Columbia University's School of Dental and Oral Surgery and medical degree from the University of Connecticut's Health Center General Surgery.

Dr. Chang, a Kailua resident, is a member of the American College of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, the American Board of Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, the Hawaii State Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons, and the American Dental Association.

HDS also promoted Joann Gebauer to the newly created position of director of professional relations. She will lead the professional relations team and be responsible for managing relationships with HDS participating dentists and expanding HDS's Commercial, Medicare and Medicaid networks.

This is Gebauer's fourth promotion in 10 years. She joined HDS as a compliance analyst in 2013, was promoted to senior compliance analyst in 2015, compliance manager in 2018, and privacy officer in 2020. She reports to Minna Lehti, HDS's chief operating officer.

"Our network of participating dentists is the largest in the state, but we are continually expanding and growing our base of dentists to provide care for our HDS members," Lehti said. "I'm confident Joann will be able to take our professional relations department to a new level."

Gebauer, a Mililani resident, brings nearly 30 years of experience in the health care and insurance industries. Prior to joining HDS, she served as a quality assurance consultant for one of the country's largest liability insurance carriers.

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About Hawaii Dental Service

Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) is the leading dental benefits provider in the state, serving over one million residents throughout Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan. It has the largest network of dentists, with more than 95 percent of Hawaii's licensed, practicing dentists participating with HDS.

As a nonprofit founded in Hawaii in 1962, HDS is committed to making quality oral health care affordable and accessible. Employers who offer HDS dental plans to their employees represent Hawaii's diverse industries, companies, unions, associations, and nonprofit organizations. HDS also offers dental plans for individuals and families. HDS has been a part of Delta Dental, the nation's largest and most experienced dental insurance benefits provider, since 1966. This affiliation gives members access to a nationwide network of participating dentists.

For more information, visit HawaiiDentalService.com.