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University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine Receives \$2.25 Million from Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) to Establish HDS Oral Health Endowment for Medical Education

Dr. Matthew Oishi Named Inaugural Oral Health Director

Honolulu, HI — The role of oral health is being elevated to a new level of importance for the next generation of physicians. A licensed Hawai'i dentist, now on board at the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), has been designated to integrate oral health into the medical school's core curriculum, thanks to the generous support of Hawaii Dental Service (HDS), the state's leading dental benefits provider.

JABSOM has named Dr. Matthew Oishi as its first oral health director, a newly established part-time faculty position funded with a \$2.25 million endowment from Hawaii Dental Service.

Dr. Oishi will develop an innovative oral health curriculum for aspiring physicians during their four years in medical school, which includes lectures, workshops and clinical training in JABSOM's H.O.M.E. (Houseless Outreach and Medical Education) program. He will teach students about oral assessments, dental referral issues, and management of acute dental problems. In the coming year, JABSOM also hopes to collaborate with the UH School of Dental Hygiene to incorporate students into the H.O.M.E. clinic to work with the medical students.

"Oral health is a critical component of whole person health. We see this association between oral health and chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia," said Dr. Mark Sweet, HDS dental director. "Training medical professionals in oral health care helps them better understand this connection. We are creating a more comprehensive healthcare system that delivers better outcomes for patients."

"Dr. Oishi's extensive knowledge of public health dentistry and preventive oral care make him ideally suited for this critically important position. We appreciate the generosity of HDS and their commitment to make oral health a priority for our medical students," said Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, acting dean of UH JABSOM. "Oral

health is often overlooked in the care of patients and this position is a positive step toward integrating oral health and medical health, in the same way we have seen the need to make mental health a priority in the delivery of primary care.”

Dr. Oishi currently serves as a public health dentist at Kokua Kalihi Valley (KKV), where he provides education to New York University dental residents. He also currently works as a community dentist at the Lāna ‘i Community Health Center, and as a geriatric dentist at the Arcadia Retirement Community.

Dr. Oishi earned a master’s in public health from the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, a master of science degree in dental public health at the University of Iowa, and a doctor of science in dentistry degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He completed a general dental residency at the Hackensack University Medical Center and a fellowship in geriatric and special needs dentistry at the University of Iowa.

Dr. Oishi has been an adjunct clinical assistant professor in the Department of Preventive and Community Dentistry at the University of Iowa for four years. His professional education credentials and experience include working as a dental extern at Indian Health Service in Barrow, Alaska; the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the Tokyo Medical and Dental University in Tokyo, Japan. He also has served as a consultant for Delta Dental of New Jersey and as a public policy fellow at the Gert Quigley Government Affairs Fellowship.

Dr. Oishi’s research and scholarship achievements include conducting and publishing research on dental care within vulnerable and minority populations, including the elderly, HIV patients, African Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

The new oral health position and direction of UH JABSOM were validated by a recent report funded by the Delta Dental Institute, which showed that integrating medical and dental services improves health care outcomes, particularly among vulnerable populations, including the elderly, children, pregnant women, and those in need of chronic disease management.

The report, released from the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine in September 2022, noted that current medical-dental integration (MDI) models increase communication between dental and medical providers, including the exchange of electronic health records and the use of telehealth and teledentistry to coordinate care for patients with complex conditions.

The Delta Dental Institute-funded study also noted that MDI-focused clinics have the capacity to diagnose and refer for chronic disease management, reducing the number of facilities, appointments, and providers a patient must interact with to receive comprehensive oral and systemic care.

“The MDI model erases demarcations between oral health care and systemic care, with dentists recognizing chronic diseases and making referrals to physicians, and

physicians making referrals to dentists for streamlined, coordinated care for patients,” Dr. Sweet said.

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About Hawaii Dental Service

Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) is the leading dental benefits provider in the state, serving nearly 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.