

Concept Clearance

Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building for Minority Dental Institutions to Reduce Oral Health Disparities

Clinical, Epidemiology & Behavioral Research Branch Division of Population & Health Promotion Sciences

Objective

This concept clearance for a Request for Application (RFA) will provide funding to minority dental schools (Institutions) for the development of research infrastructure and the capacity to carry out research aimed at reducing oral health disparities. This initiative is part of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research's Strategic Plan to reduce and/or eliminate oral health disparities in racial and ethnic minority populations and will be co-sponsored with the new National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities.

The purpose of this initiative is to augment and strengthen the institutional infrastructure and capacity for these institutions to conduct basic, clinical and behavioral research with the objective of reducing oral health disparities. This will be done through the support of assessment and planning activities as well as the development of collaborative research arrangements with other, research-intensive institutions.

Description

Oral and craniofacial diseases and disorders are among the most common health problems affecting the people of the U.S. and they place a

disproportionately higher burden on particular population subgroups. Addressing disparities in craniofacial, oral and dental health among diverse populations of the United States continues to be a major focus of the research supported by the NIDCR. Further information on the Institute's *Plan to Eliminate Craniofacial, Oral & Dental Health Disparities* is available at the NIDCR homepage (<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov>).

Minority dental schools represent a rich source of talent containing the cultural sensitivity and perspective needed for studying health disparities in craniofacial, oral and dental health. However, these institutions have not yet totally developed nor sustained a critical mass of faculty and research resources to conduct scientifically meritorious research on diseases and disorders that disproportionately affect the populations they serve. The active involvement and participation of these institutions and their faculty in oral health research is needed if we are to develop a stronger national oral health research effort aimed at addressing the disparities caused by oral diseases and conditions.

The prospect of establishing an oral health research program in a minority dental school that is collaborating with a research-intensive academic center would take maximum advantage of their respective expertise and experience.

This two phase initiative is designed to provide resources to minority dental schools for the development (Phase I) and implementation (Phase II) of an institutional plan to enhance their infrastructure for research, to recruit and/or retain personnel with research expertise relevant to the objectives of reducing

oral health disparities, and to establish partnerships/collaborations with other institutions that will lead to research aimed at reducing oral health disparities.

At the end of the funding period the awardees will be expected to have strengthened their capacity to proceed with the submission of scientifically meritorious developmental grants for specific research areas to reduce oral health disparities, to have established partnerships/collaborations with other academic institutions, and to have initiated training and career development programs relevant to the mission of NIDCR.

NIDCR will utilize the Cooperative Agreement award as the administrative mechanism to support the Research Infrastructure and Capacity Building for Minority Institutions to Reduce Oral Health Disparities Award.

Funding

It is anticipated that up to three awards may be made in FY 2002. Phase I will be funded at \$350,000 total costs for one year. Phase II will be funded for two years up to \$500,000 total costs each year.