

Marquette Dental School: Statement on rural student sponsorship program

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Statement from Dean William K. Lobb, D.D.S., M.S., M.P.H.

Marquette University School of Dentistry

Regarding the Action by the Joint Committee on Finance to Create a Marquette University Rural Dental Student Scholarship Program and Making an Appropriation

Marquette University School of Dentistry is grateful to State Sen. Thomas Tiffany and the Joint Committee on Finance for creating a rural dental scholarship program for Wisconsin resident students enrolled at the Marquette University School of Dentistry. The inclusion of this language in the Wisconsin State Budget is similar to recently proposed legislation from State Sen. Patrick Testin and State Rep. Tony Kurtz, which creates a more intentional pipeline of dentists for rural Wisconsin through a Rural Dental Track Program at the school. We are pleased the Joint Committee on Finance adopted this important program as the state looks for ways

to increase dental access, particularly in rural communities. While the overall number of dentists in Wisconsin is adequate for the population of the state, like other health care professions, we need a state strategy to incentivize dentists to practice in rural Wisconsin. The Marquette University School of Dentistry has a history of providing service in rural communities through a network of affiliated clinics. This program would allow for up to five dental scholarships per class, in exchange for 18 months of service per scholarship year upon graduation in federally designated dental health professional shortage areas. We believe this will allow dentists to matriculate and become important members of a rural community as oral health care providers to underserved communities.

Since its founding in 1894, the Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSOD) has been committed to educating and training dentists. In 1973, MUSOD and the state of Wisconsin formalized their partnership, and MUSOD continues to be the state of Wisconsin's dental school. On an annual basis, MUSOD serves nearly 27,000 patients in over 108,000 patient visits in more than 60 of Wisconsin's 72 counties. MUSOD is also one of the state's largest dental Medicaid providers.