INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY
Office of the Dean
IUPUI

January 5, 2011

Dr. Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor, IUPUI
355 N. Lansing Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

Dear Chancellor Bantz,

I am pleased to write in to support the nomination the Community Dental Clinic of LaGrange County (CDC) for the 2011 Chancellor's Community Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement. Members of Indiana University School of Dentistry faculty have worked closely with the people of the Amish community through the planning, building and operation of the clinic since 1996. This partnership is an excellent example of an IUPUI school having IMPACT on the regional community.

Dental visits present barriers for the Amish that are not encountered by most Indiana residents. Transportation is either very slow or quite expensive depending on their choice of a horse and buggy or hiring a van for longer trips to a dentist. Because insurance and public assistance are not accepted, the out-of-pocket expenses may be a deterrent to receiving regular dental care. The Community Dental Clinic provides a sliding fee schedule for families with low income which includes many of the families who have been laid off of work because of depressed recreational vehicle and construction industries.

In addition to providing affordable comprehensive dental services for the rural populations of LaGrange and Elkhart Counties, the Community Dental Clinic (CDC) provides community-based education in a rural setting for IUSD's dental students. Fourth year dental students are invited to volunteer to provide dental services at the clinic. CDC provides an intercultural experience with a population that includes more than 43,000 of Indiana's citizens. These benefits are of great value to IUSD because they assist in fulfilling our responsibility to foster intercultural awareness and respect. Working at CDC also enables our students the experience of interacting with a rural community. Such an experience may be the spark that encourages more of our graduates to practice in Indiana's disproportionately underserved rural areas.

IUSD faculty and students appreciate the annual visit and presentation about Amish culture by the CDC board of directors which is predominantly Amish. Students have the opportunity to learn about Amish beliefs and practices as well as the protocols of the dental clinic.

When IUSD researchers needed a study population of children that required several years of repeated dental examinations to determine the effectiveness of dental sealants, the Amish community agreed to help. They allowed the IUSD researchers to bring the Seal Indiana mobile dental clinic to their Amish parochial schools and consented for their children to participate. Since the people of the Amish culture typically remain in the same settlement throughout their lives, the children were available for repeated examinations during several years. The National Institutes of Health were impressed with the exceptionally high subject retention rate of close to 100%; only one child enrolled in the study moved to another school district.

The CDC-IUSD partnership is of great benefit to IUSD's education, research and service goals. The Community Dental Clinic is deserving of recognition; therefore, I request that the clinic be considered for the Chancellor's Community Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement.

Sincerely,

John N. Williams, DMD, MBA
Dean

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