INDIANA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY
IUPUI

January 9, 2011

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

Dear Chancellor Bantz,

I am pleased to nominate the Community Dental Clinic of LaGrange County for the Chancellor's Community Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement – 2011. Eleven years ago the Community Dental Clinic (CDC) was established as a not for profit safety-net facility through a partnership of faculty from IUPUI and the Amish community in LaGrange County. The original goal was to improve the oral health of children with hemophilia in order to avoid the complications that would occur as a result of dental extractions. That goal lead to the goal of including the siblings of the affected children, and that goal led to including all children, Amish and non-Amish, who would arrive at their door. A few years later, adult patients were also welcomed.

The original visionaries who initiated this plan were Drs. Brian Sanders, dental faculty of IU School of Dentistry, and Dr. Amy Shapiro, hematologist from Riley Hospital, now Director of the Indianapolis Hemophilia and Thrombosis Center in cooperation with Mr. Dennis Lehman, Mr. Ervin Miller and other leaders of the Amish community in LaGrange County. All remain actively involved in the clinic and have seen it grow to a full-time dental clinic with two dentists and seven operatories providing care for 5,000 patients annually.

A clinic was built with help from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Indiana State Department of Health and the Amish community. The dental clinic now has a dental director, Dr. Lisa Leniski, who is an IUSD grad with specialty training at Riley Hospital for Children and is LaGrange County's only pediatric dentist. A second CDC dentist, Dr. Julie Kinsler, treats adults at the clinic.

The collaboration with IUPUI did not stop with building the clinic. Since 43,000 Indiana citizens in 23 settlements in rural areas around the perimeter of Indiana belong to the Amish community, it seemed appropriate for IUSD dental students to learn about this culture. The community welcomed them to come to the clinic to provide dental services. In order to prepare the dental students for their brief immersion into LaGrange County, members of the predominantly Amish Board of Directors began coming to IUSD annually to provide a lecture and discussion session about Amish history, religion and customs. Their presentation followed by lunch with faculty and staff has become an anticipated annual event.

Although this organization is not centered in Central Indiana, it is apparent when walking through Riley Hospital and other referral locations in Indianapolis, that the Amish families frequently use specialty health services in Indianapolis that are not available in their home

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locations. As a result of this partnership, dental professionals and increasingly other health professionals are better prepared to provide culturally sensitive health care.

People of the Amish culture have two characteristics that suggest they may be important subjects for certain types of research; they have a higher prevalence of genetic disorders than the general population, and typically they remain in the same location for their entire lives which enables researchers to conduct research for extensive time periods. The CDC has been instrumental in enabling IUSD to conduct research on dental caries progression; a type of research that requires children's oral health to be followed and reexamined for several consecutive years. Not many communities could offer help with obtaining a study sample with close to 100% retention after three years, as they did.

My husband, Dr. Keith Yoder, and I have been on the CDC board of directors for eight years and have thoroughly enjoyed the friendship of the Amish community. Their hospitality, commitment to community and even their humor are unmatched.

I respectfully request that you consider selecting the Community Dental Clinic for the 2011 Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement.

Sincerely,

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Additional faculty members who are nominating:

Dr. Judith Chin, IU School of Dentistry
Dr. Brian Sanders, IU School of Dentistry