

2019 Legislative Priorities

Our goal: Improving access to vital oral health care for our state's most vulnerable citizens

Priority: Supplemental funding for our Apple Health (Medicaid) clinical care

We requested \$2 million in each year of the next two biennia, and we gratefully acknowledge that the Governor's budget has earmarked \$1 million in each of the next two years. This supplemental funding will help to defray the direct costs of providing this care and improve access to care for these citizens. It will support the required clinical personnel along with supplies and operational costs. This will let us:

- Continue our leading role in the oral health care safety net.
- Reduce the backlog of patients waiting for urgently needed care.
- Provide more cost-efficient care.

Preventive care makes budgetary sense: It is far more economical than letting patients in urgent need visit the emergency room, where they receive only temporary relief, do not resolve their dental issues, and invariably return.

Priority: Medicaid reimbursement

Washington ranks 47th in Medicaid reimbursement rates. The current fee schedule does not support a sustainable program. Improved rates would not only help us serve more patients in need, but induce more private dentists to provide Medicaid care and greatly improve access for this patient population.

Priority: Supporting our DECOD special-needs patients

Our School's DECOD (Dental Education in the Care of Persons with Disabilities) program was established in 1974 to increase access to care for people with disabilities. DECOD provides dental care that is not available elsewhere in the community for patients with developmental and acquired disabilities. In this special program mandated and funded by the Legislature, we receive a \$154 per-visit fee administered by the Health Care Authority, **which has not increased in 10 years**. Our actual cost of care averages \$366 per visit, and in FY 2018, we lost more than \$700,000 in this essential program. DECOD is not sustainable at the current reimbursement rate, and we urgently ask the Legislature to increase the per-visit rate to \$375 with an annual cap of not less than \$1.5 million.

Thank you for your consideration.

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The UW School of Dentistry, our state's only dental school, trains nearly half of all dentists practicing here. The School was ranked 14th in the world by the British educational organization Quacquarelli Symonds in 2018. It offers a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree and advanced degrees in all major dental specialties, with programs that directly serve community oral health needs throughout Washington. We are also the state's leading referral destination for providers' most medically complex patients with oral health needs. Our clinics are typically the state's only referral destinations for these patients and receive referrals from dentists and physicians in every part of Washington.

See other side →

Providing dental care where our state needs it the most

RIDE is a **mission-based** program that aims to increase the number of graduates who practice in **rural and/or underserved areas of Washington state**. We achieve this by immersing RIDE students in the more remote communities of our state and through **extensive clinical training** serving these populations.

Program Objectives:

- Distribute dental providers and improve access to care in critical-need areas.
- Increase the time UW dental students are trained in rural and underserved areas.
- Increase recruitment and retention of dental graduates in rural Washington.

RIDE Achievements:

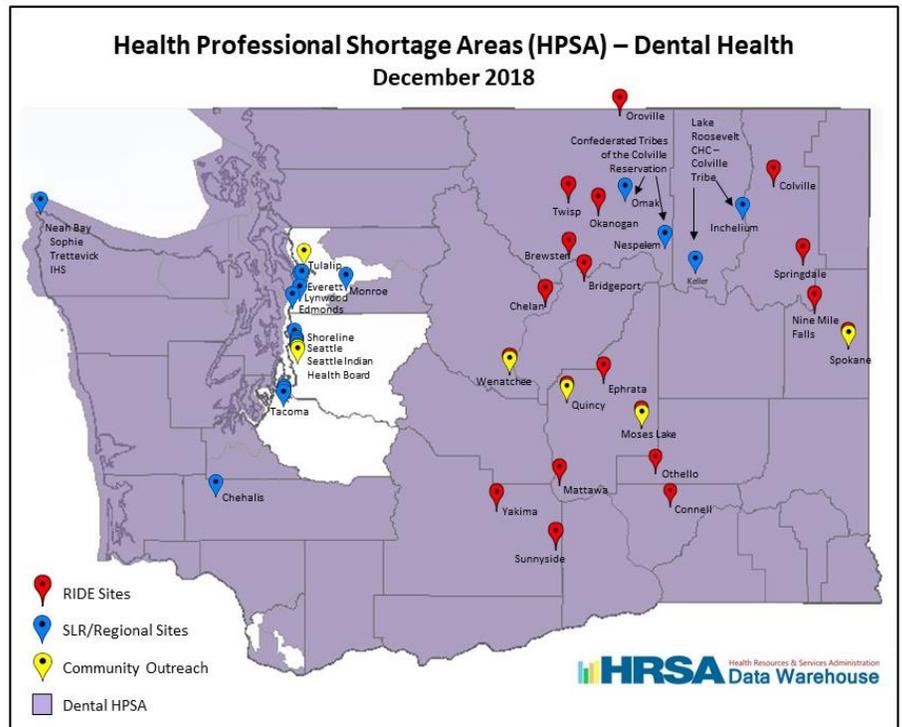
- Since 2009, RIDE students have provided over **44,000 hours of patient care** at community health centers – **35% for children** – in rural/underserved communities in Eastern and Central Washington. In nine years, RIDE has provided over **\$10 million in services**.
- The majority of the patients cared for at these clinics are at less than **200% of the poverty level** and are served by Medicaid or sliding-scale payment programs.
- **77% of the RIDE graduates** practice in Washington. Of those, **82% have returned to rural/underserved communities** in our state.

RIDE helps support dental education initiatives in the State and community by:

- Building excellent partnerships with EWU Spokane and the community clinics that oversee student rotations.
- Developing infrastructure and expertise to send all students on community-based service learning rotations, which deliver 12,600 hours per year of additional care to rural/underserved populations.
- Serving as an incubator for new education models (e.g., interprofessional experiences, small-group learning) that have ultimately been incorporated into curriculum changes.



RIDE students in the dental lab at the EWU Spokane Campus



National Recognition:

- American Dental Education Association's highest award, The William J. Gies Award for Vision in an Academic Dental Institution (2017)
- Dr. Edward B. Shils Entrepreneurial Fund Award (2013)
- National award in the "Collaboration Initiative" category of the UBTECH Conference Innovation Awards (2012)

RIDE Website & Video: <https://dental.washington.edu/ride/>

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