

As Chairman of the Department of Dentistry and GPR Program Director at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, I am most pleased to inform you about two significant recent departmental developments. We received formal notification Feb 26, 2019 of initial CODA accreditation for a two resident, three year Dental Anesthesiology Residency Program that launched at AIMMC July 1, 2019. Ken Kromash, DDS, Dental Anesthesiologist, who has been the Section Head of Sedation, Pain and Anxiety Control for the GPR Program at AIMMC for the past 27 years, is the Program Director. The addition of the Dental Anesthesiology (DA) Program will be greatly complimentary to the GPR program which features several unique programs that provide dental and sedation services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and medical compromises. We currently treat approximately 250 patients per year with IV sedation in the outpatient dental center and 200-250 cases under GA in the OR. An operatory in the Dental Center is currently being converted into an anesthesia/surgical suite which will allow for special needs and pediatric cases to be treated under GA on an outpatient basis rather than in the more complex, more costly OR setting. The DA program is the eighth program nationally and will help meet the critical need to train more dental anesthesiologists to provide access to care for an ever expanding number of pediatric, special needs and geriatric patients who require anesthesia for dental treatment.


Secondly, on Wednesday, March 20, we received notification that the Department of Dentistry had been named the recipient of an American Dental Association Foundation (ADAF) Access to Oral Health Care for Children with Special Needs grant that will provide funding to increase service capacity and improve care for children with special needs through increased capacity to manage cases in an outpatient setting rather than the OR. Funding from this grant will subsidize sedation/general anesthesia services in the Dental Center in order to complete necessary dental treatment for up to 50 underserved special needs children in the first year, 75 in the second year, and 100 in the third year. This grant will also greatly assist in the successful launch of the DA residency program. Dr. Ken Kromash, DA and Program Director and DA residents will provide pre-op assessment, intra-op anesthesia and post-op recovery monitoring and discharge. The new program will be a model for the advanced training of dental anesthesiologists, who play an important role in the provision of oral health care to children with developmental and physical disabilities. Staff attending pediatric dentists Drs. Joanne Oppenheim and Ricardo Mendoza, along with GPR residents, will develop appropriate dental treatment plans and provide the dental services. Pediatric and general dentists who are on staff at AIMMC can refer grant qualified patients for anesthesia services and provide the dental treatment. Pediatric or general dentists who are not on staff at AIMMC can refer patients for treatment and the patient will be referred back for ongoing maintenance. Following completion of oral rehabilitation and appropriate parental/caretaker oral hygiene and nutritional counseling patients will be referred back to their dental homes for ongoing recall visits. Should the patient not have a regular dental home, we will be most happy to become the patient's dental home.

In order to effectively utilize the funds from the ADAF grant, I am asking your assistance in referring eligible special needs children to our Program when they present in your practice in need of dental care with anesthesia. The criteria for coverage through the grant is the following:

1. Age (18 and under)
2. Qualifying Condition(s) (intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder)
3. Financial Status (Medicaid eligible or no source of reimbursement)

As mentioned, this grant will fund anesthesia services, all associated room charges, and if necessary the pediatric attending fee. Medicaid reimbursement and/or the grant will fund dental treatment. Please contact Program Coordinator, Ms. Clorest Holmes, 773-871-2188 to schedule an initial evaluation appointment for more information.

Sincerely,



James D. Benz, DDS
Chair and Program Director, General Practice Residency
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