

## CODA Communicator

### Special Announcement



### Commission on Dental Accreditation to Establish Standards for Dental Therapy Education Programs

At its August 5, 2011 meeting, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) granted a request from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry to establish accreditation standards for dental therapy education programs.

It is important to note that CODA is not evaluating any existing dental therapy program. Rather, the Chair of the Commission, Dr. Donald Joondeph, will appoint a Task Force to develop new standards for dental therapy education programs. The Task Force must report to the Commission on its progress at the August 10, 2012 Commission meeting.

The Commission is committed to an open and transparent dialogue as the dental therapy standards are developed. The process of developing standards will take two years, at a minimum. The communities of interest will be able to review and comment on the draft standards, through written comment at any time during the process, or at open hearings. Dental therapy education programs are not eligible for accreditation by the Commission until the standards are finalized and implemented.

In reaching the decision to grant the request, the Commission carefully considered the University of Minnesota's documentation and evidence for each criterion under the Commission's "Policy on Eligibility of New Allied Dental Programs for Accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation." During the discussion of the request, the following additional points were made:

- The establishment of standards for dental therapy education is reflective of the Commission's mission, which is to serve the public by establishing, maintaining and applying standards regarding the quality and continuous improvement of dental and dental-related education.
- The Commission is the only entity that has expertise in accreditation of dental education programs and can set standards on a national basis. There is the potential for fragmentation of the accreditation process if the state dental boards or other accrediting agencies accredit programs.
- Patient welfare and patient care could be adversely affected if there are no educational standards for dental therapy. The Commission has the ability and the obligation to set educational standards to help ensure patient safety.

For additional information on the accreditation process, please visit the Commission on Dental Accreditation area of ADA.org at <http://www.ada.org/100.aspx>.

*This email has been distributed to the Commission on Dental Accreditation community of interest.*

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