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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Spending \$10 million in state funds on a second dental school isn't the way to improve families' access to oral health care**

*Dr. Gene Shoemaker, president of the Wisconsin Dental Association, today issued the following statement regarding the State Building Commission's vote earlier this week to release \$10 million in funding for a new dental education facility at the Marshfield Clinic:*

"There is disappointment throughout the Wisconsin dental community about the state's recent, ill-advised and lame-duck decision to waste \$10 million in taxpayer funds on what Marshfield Clinic is finally admitting would be a second dental school in the state.

This poor public policy shows many of our elected officials are still making the unhealthy choice to throw money at new brick-and-mortar projects that do not address the real and urgent barriers to dental care thousands of low-income Wisconsin residents face. This \$10 million expenditure will do very little to clean teeth, fix cavities or brighten smiles now or in the future.

The state's own study shows Wisconsin has enough dentists to meet residents' needs for at least the next decade. The Wisconsin Dental Association has proposed real solutions to eliminate barriers to oral health care now. They include allowing dental assistants and hygienists to work more closely with dentists to help more people, encouraging early prevention, providing incentives for new dentists to settle in underserved areas and improving financial support of the state's Medicaid and BadgerCare dental programs.

These are practical, cost-effective and realistic ways to help more Wisconsin adults and children get dental care, and a much stronger approach than funding a new building.

Wisconsin can and should do a better job of delivering quality dental care to its residents, but having taxpayers write a \$10 million check for more buildings and administrative bureaucracy is a giant step backward. The 2,900 WDA member dentists stand ready to work with a new group of state leaders to make real, viable healthy choices in the challenge to provide all Wisconsinites with access to quality care."

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