

Chapter 5

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities and challenges abound! There are opportunities to help the needy with dental care in your own town. But it is always a challenge to deliver portable dental care anywhere outside of your office. The question is, how comfortable do you feel working outside your dental office "comfort zone" and how far do you want to travel away from that office? The world is within your reach with today's modern jet travel. I am writing this on a flight out of Bombay, India after a 30-hour series of flights to get here from Tulsa, Oklahoma. This is the last leg of flights to Trivandrum on the southern tip of India. What kind of a challenge are you looking for? The opportunities are there. It just takes a decision on your part to go. The time away from your practice will be greatly rewarded. And you will have a unique perspective of dentistry. Please do not wait until after you retire from practice to take some of these exciting and most rewarding trips.

There are innumerable opportunities within the United States. Many provider organizations would love to have dental volunteers help their needy. Nursing homes, hospitals, low-income clinics and facilities for the disabled would even pay a modest amount to have that service available to them. Public Health, penal institutions, Indian Health Services, and mental health services normally pay for dental care and have their own modern clinics.

The type of dental care you will be able to deliver largely depends upon the provider organization. Their ability to support you depends a great deal upon available funding and their organizational skills. One example of a provider organization would be the United States Public Health Service. They have all types of delivery systems, transportation and competent individuals delivering dental health care to the needy. In fact, the United States Public Health Service is among the most advanced and complete of any in the world. Even so, they still do not meet the total needs of the United States population.

Most other countries have precious little dental care. For instance, the international distribution of dentists shows the United States with one of the lowest population-to-dentist ratios of any nation in the world. Other governments may have few resources to draw on, with only a limited number of dentists delivering services to their respective populations. In these situations, both rich and poor may have limited dental care available. In addition, the amount of dental equipment available for teams invited to serve the needy country is limited. Many times the equipment and supplies must be transported into the country and then to the clinic site. All of this material must have government approval for importation, or the equipment may never get out of the customs department at the port of entry. In some instances, exorbitant tips have had to be paid to foreign

customs officials before much needed equipment and supplies were allowed to pass into the country. It is important to have a contract or official letter of invitation or preapproved work permit for the customs officials to clear you without problems. Better yet, have a government official or their representative meet you at the port of entry (airport) for clearance. Even then problems may still exist.

Working cooperatively with a government's ministry of health to get approval is by far the best way to operate. They can provide you with the necessary legal protection and freedom to practice without fear of being reported or deported. If you are helping their people most generally they will help you in return with whatever you need.

Some universities in foreign countries have reciprocity with universities in the United States. In other words, there is an exchange of instructors at given times for each to work in the other's country. **ADA publications** of dental schools page 23.

A wide variety of purposes can be served with these programs, including mobile clinics and statistical research. The length of stay may be several days up to a year's sabbatical. These programs are good, but many times funds are limited or nil. **Health Volunteers Overseas** as good reference. hvousa.org

Church denominations have missionaries in most countries of the world. Health personnel working with these church groups must be careful not to break the laws or customs of the country. Local missionaries can inform the dental team of local restrictions and laws. Usually, it is permissible to deliver health services in conjunction with the local church, but many times health services will be confined to the church building or approved clinic site. There are legal ramifications in some countries, so that health care cannot be performed outside the respective church property or licensed clinic. Use wisdom and respect the laws, customs and values of the missionaries you are visiting.

Health teams working with mission churches may or may not be government approved. Much depends upon the country that you are visiting. It may be risky business if the government is of another religion and uses harassment or oppressive tactics to stop your work. Also, you must not put yourself in double jeopardy by transporting prescription drugs across their borders without authority to do so.

Missionary work in some countries is illegal. Yet there are hundreds of missionaries working freely in those countries and probably thousands of churches have been built. Medical groups, who travel in and out of these countries to work with missionaries, normally enter as tourists. When crossing the border they carefully pack medical supplies and equipment to look like tourists, lest they be turned

back and not allowed to enter. Groups, who obtain the federal permission to enter, will have a letter of invitation for the border guards to see. Some groups have obtained letters of permission from the local or state government where they will be working. Be aware of the laws of the country. **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.**

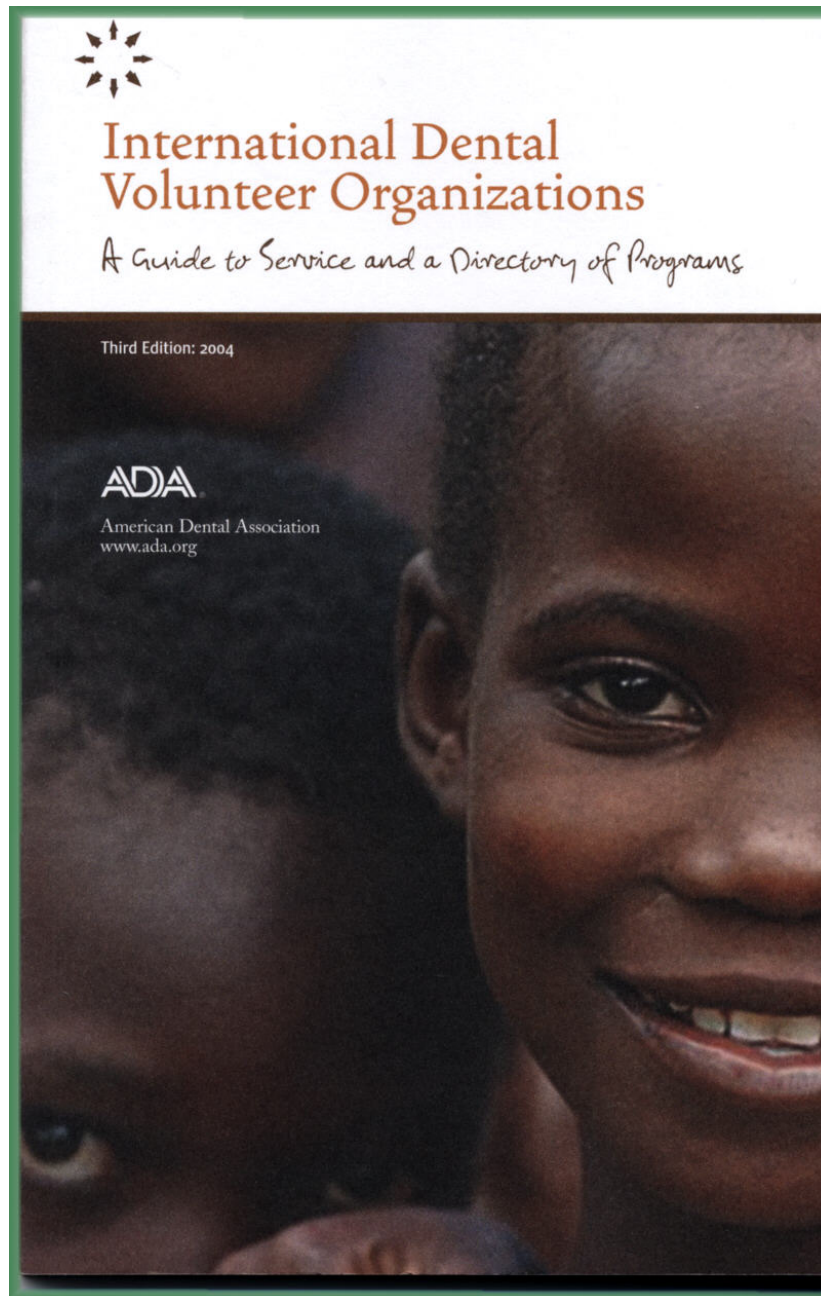
In Mexico, the governor's wife is the health and education overseer for the state. A letter from her will give clearance for a medical team to enter the country. Even with letters, the border guards can still give groups a difficult time. In some instances, they have held up medical teams for days, before allowing them to cross. The Mexican Federal Government does not sanction groups freely coming to work on their people. This is especially true if these groups enter to work with missionaries who may technically be there illegally. Wisdom must be used at the border in dealing with a country's federal authorities.

Local community officials will usually do their best to help health teams after arriving on site. These officials live with the needy people and would be in trouble with the village if free health services were not permitted to set up. It is usually a political feather in the local official's cap if he can get a physician, dentist or medical team to visit his village and donate their services.

Information about opportunities available within the U.S. and worldwide can be obtained from several resources. The Department of Health and Human Services is the primary health agency of the Federal government. They have a number of programs available for dental personnel. Some information is available on the following pages along with the American Dental Association booklet called ***"International Dental Volunteer Organizations."*** One copy of this document is available free of charge to members of the American Dental Association. Non-members interested in receiving a copy of this publication will be charged \$15. To obtain a copy of the document, please contact the:

American Dental Association
Department of International Dental Health
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 440-2725
www.ada.org

There are opportunities and challenges for service both at your back door and around the world. It is your choice to move out of your comfortable practice and embark on an adventure to help others. I believe you will find it rewarding beyond belief and something to look back at with feelings of great personal accomplishment. Set achievable goals and go for it!



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American Dental Association
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 440-2726 or Email: international@ada.org

Council on
Access,
Prevention
and
Interprofessional
Relations

Manual On Dental Care Access Programs

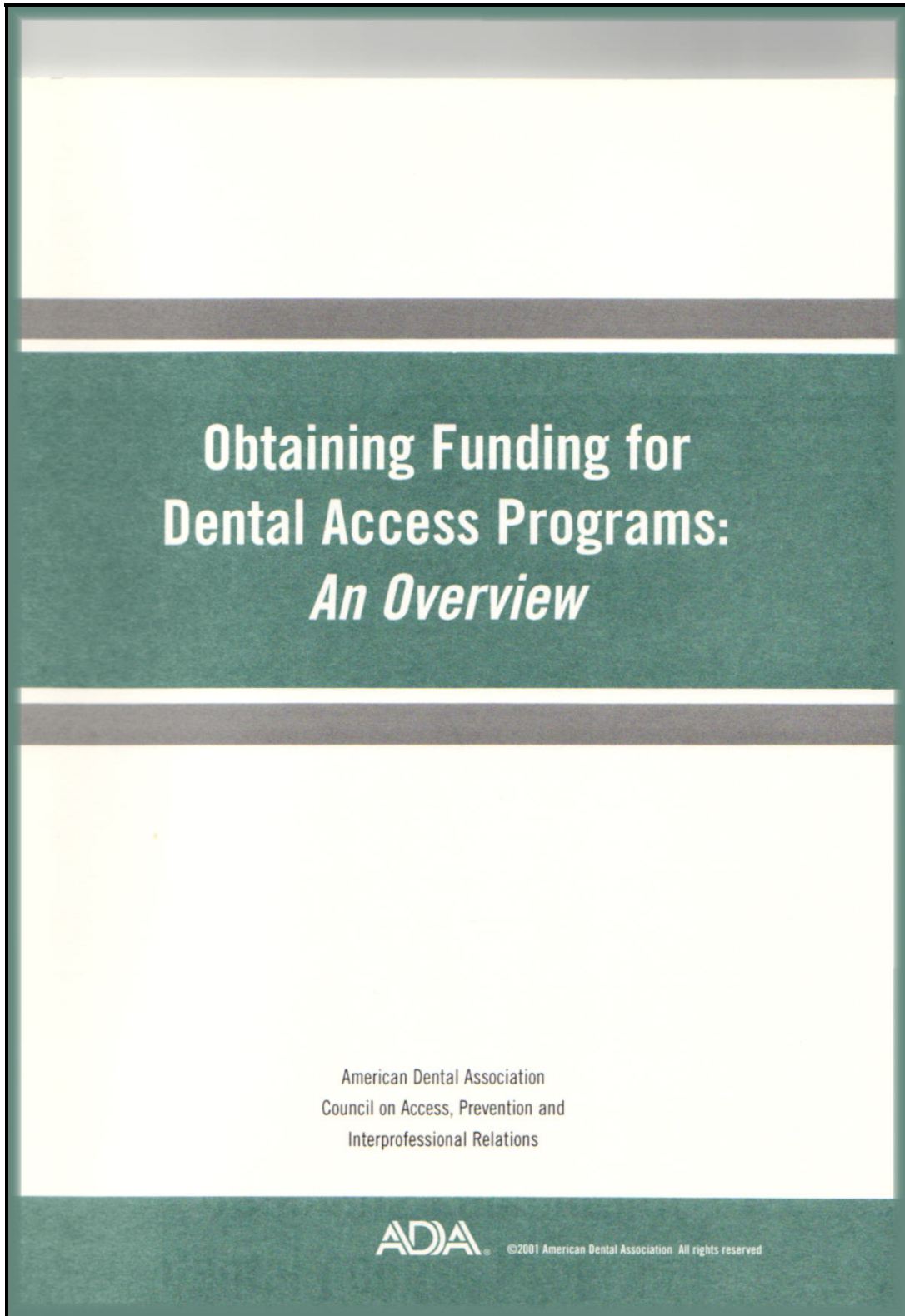
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Available through ADA, 108 pages
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Dental Access Program Marketing: *How to Build Public Image and Participation*

American Dental Association
Council on Access, Prevention and
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Available through ADA, 50 pages
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), an Operating Division of the Health and Human Services (HHS), is the principal health agency of the Federal Government and the largest public health program in the world. Approximately 63,000 civil service and 6,000 commissioned officers are employed throughout the United States and in foreign countries. The mission of PHS is the improvement and advancement of the health of all citizens. To accomplish this mission, PHS programs are designed to:

- develop knowledge through biomedical, behavioral, and treatment of diseases;
- control and prevent diseases;
- improve the health care systems, including development of creative techniques in medical methodology;
- assure safe and effective drugs and healthful foods;
- expand health resources

PHS is directed by the Assistant Secretary for Health (ASH) who serves as the principal advisor to the Office of the Secretary of PHS on health and health-related matters. The ASH is assisted in the planning and administration of PHS programs and activities by the Surgeon General of the PHS and several health agencies and regional offices. PHS is comprised of the following agencies:

National Institutes of Health

Food and Drug Administration
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Indian Health Service
Health Resources and Services Administration
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Aging

Each component of PHS has its own personnel office and handles its own recruitment; therefore you must apply to the agency(s) of your choice. Appropriate agency personnel offices, or Federal Job Information Centers in your area, can provide you with specific information on current vacancies and details of qualification requirements for particular jobs. If additional information is desired on a specific agency, contact the appropriate personnel office listed on the following page.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH (ASH)

Under the direction of the Assistant Secretary for Health, ASH is responsible for all programs administered by the PHS agencies and provides executive leadership to PHS. ASH supports the Assistant Secretary for Health in the discharge of responsibilities for planning and directing the activities of PHS to protect the health of the American public, including the environment. ASH conducts international health affairs; formulates health policy; maintains relationships with other Federal, State, and local governmental and private agencies concerned with health; and provides policy guidance for health-related activities throughout HHS. The agency also provides leadership in biomedical and health service research; and provides leadership, coordination, and direction of a nationwide program of disease prevention and health promotion.

The Commissioned Corps, a component of PHS, is an organization of uniformed officers who are health professionals. The COPS is headed by the Surgeon General, who supports the Assistant Secretary for Health in providing leadership and direction for commissioned corps personnel.

Also assisting the Assistant Secretary for Health are the PHS Regional Offices I-X. The Regional Offices are the ASH's prime advisor on public health needs, problems, and priorities in the different regions of the United States. PHS Regional Offices support the PHS mission of improving the health of the Nation's population by administering regional health programs and activities to assure a coordinated regional effort in support of national health policies and State and local needs within each region.

The ASH includes a staff of over 1,000 employees to support its mission. Among the occupations employed are accountants, budget analysts, contract, procurement and grants specialists, management and program analysts, personnel and equal opportunity specialists, and clerical and technical support personnel. ASH employees are located in Washington DC and Rockville, Maryland with Regional Offices in Boston MA, New York City NY, Philadelphia PA, Atlanta GA, Chicago IL, Dallas TX, Kansas City MO, Denver CO, San Francisco CA, and Seattle WA.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH

200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201
(202) 619-0257

www.usphs.gov/main/contact.aspx

Division of Medicine and Dentistry: Immediate Staff Positions

Phone: (301) 443-6190 phone • Fax: (301) 443-8890 • Email: cbazell@hrsa.gov

HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA)

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) helps provide health resources for medically underserved populations. HRSA supports a nationwide network of 643 community and migrant health centers, and 144 primary care programs for the homeless and residents of public housing, serving 8.1 million Americans each year. HRSA also works to build the health care workforce and maintains the National Health Service Corps, oversees the nation's organ transplantation system, works to decrease infant mortality and improve child health and provides services to people with AIDS through the Ryan White CARE Act programs.

HRSA has leadership responsibility for programs, which provide general health services and resources relating to access, equity, quality, and cost of care. HRSA pursues its objectives by supporting states and communities in their efforts to plan, organize, and deliver health care. The Agency also provides leadership in improving the education, distribution, quality, and use of the health professionals needed to staff the nation's health care system. It also participates in the Federal campaign against AIDS by funding service demonstration projects in major cities, establishing centers to train health professionals serving AIDS patients, supporting renovation of health facilities for AIDS patients, and awarding pediatric health care grants.

The Agency monitors developments affecting health facilities and ensuring that previously aided institutions honor their commitments to provide uncompensated care. HRSA also administers the National Organ Transplant Act by serving as an information resource on donation, procurement, and transplantation and by promoting other activities designed to increase the availability of organs and tissues.

Approximately 2,300 individuals are employed by HRSA. The occupations utilized are physicians, nurses, and employees in accounting, budget analysis, grants and procurement administration, financial analysis, general administration, and public program administration. The HRSA locations include its Headquarters in Rockville, Maryland and offices within the ten Regional Offices.

HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Room 8C-26
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Telephone: (301) 594-0816
<http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/shortage/>

INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS)

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives. The IHS program is community oriented and comprehensive in scope, offering preventive, curative and rehabilitative services. In addition to general medical and dental care are services such as maternal and child health, eye care, diabetes, family planning, mental health, social services, alcoholism, nutrition, public health nursing, health education, and environmental health and sanitation.

Clinical staff in IHS facilities, which include approximately 46 hospitals, 80 health centers, and 67 smaller facilities and field health teams, work in the Indian communities and provide services. IHS also contracts with tribal and Alaska Native health organizations to operate several hospitals, numerous health clinics, with State and local health departments and private practitioners for services it cannot provide for areas where it has no facilities.

IHS Mission...to raise the physical, mental, social and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.

IHS Goal...to assure that comprehensive, culturally acceptable personal and public health services are available and accessible to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

IHS Foundation...to uphold the Federal Government's obligation to promote healthy American Indian and Alaska Native people, communities, and cultures and to honor and protect the inherent sovereign rights of Tribes.

The IHS is the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for Indian people and its goal is to raise their health status to the highest possible level. The IHS currently provides health services to approximately 1.5 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who belong to more than 557 federally recognized tribes in 35 states.

Dental Professional Contact:

Indian Health Service
Office of Health Programs
Dental Program
Parklawn Building, Room 6A-30
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Phone: (800) 447-3368
Direct: (301) 443-0029
Fax: (301) 594-6610
Email: Timothy.Lozon@ihs.gov
Website: www.ihs.gov

THE U.S. HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS

The mission of the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps is to provide highly trained and mobile health professionals who carry out programs to promote the health of the Nation, understand and prevent disease and injury, assure safe and effective drugs and medical devices, deliver health services to Federal beneficiaries, and furnish health expertise in time of war or other national or international emergencies. As one of the seven Uniformed Services of the United States, the PHS Commissioned Corps is a specialized career system designed to attract, develop, and retain health professionals who may be assigned to Federal, State or local agencies or international organizations to accomplish its mission.

Dental Programs In The U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

As a member of one of the seven Uniformed Services of the United States, the U.S. Public Service (PHS) dentist enjoys all the rights and privileges of a Commissioned Office such as: medical care, travel and transportation of dependents and household effects, and commissary and exchange privileges. Recent dental student graduates are appointed to the PHS with the equivalent rank of Navy Lieutenant. Loan repayment is available on a limited basis for dentists at some PHS shortage area sites.

Dentists in the Indian Health Service are challenged to provide a broad range of clinical services in hospitals and clinics, and are encouraged to participate in the practice of community dentistry in a cross-cultural environment serving American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Comprehensive dental care is provided to active duty personnel, including dependents and retirees, by dentists assigned to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). Modern well-equipped facilities are generally located in the coastal areas of the United States where a broad range of treatment is offered, similar to that in private practice.

A unique opportunity to provide dental services to a population that has not had appropriate access to oral health care is available within the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Most facilities are located in or near major metropolitan areas across the U.S.

The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) provides a challenging opportunity to improve the delivery of dental services to the underserved, migrant farm workers, and special population groups living in health professional shortage areas throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Trust Territories of the Pacific. The NHSC offers a highly competitive scholarship program that provides payment for tuition and fees and a monthly stipend to a small number of qualified dental

students. To ensure consideration for positions that will be available in the summer, applicants should be submitted by January.

The U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps offers a variety of employment opportunities for professionals throughout the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and in other Federal agencies/programs that employ Corps officers. Below is a list of agencies/programs that hire PHS commissioned officers.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

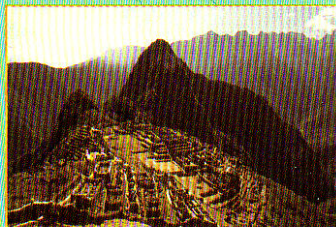
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Food and Drug Administration
Health Resources and Services Administration
Indian Health Service
National Institutes of Health
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Office of Public Health and Science
Program Support Center
Bureau of Prisons, Federal
Environmental Protection Agency
Immigration and Naturalization Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Park Service
U.S. Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety & Inspection Service
U.S. Marshals Service

Division of Commissioned Personnel
Attn: Recruitments and Assignment Branch
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 4A-18
Rockville, MD 20857-0001

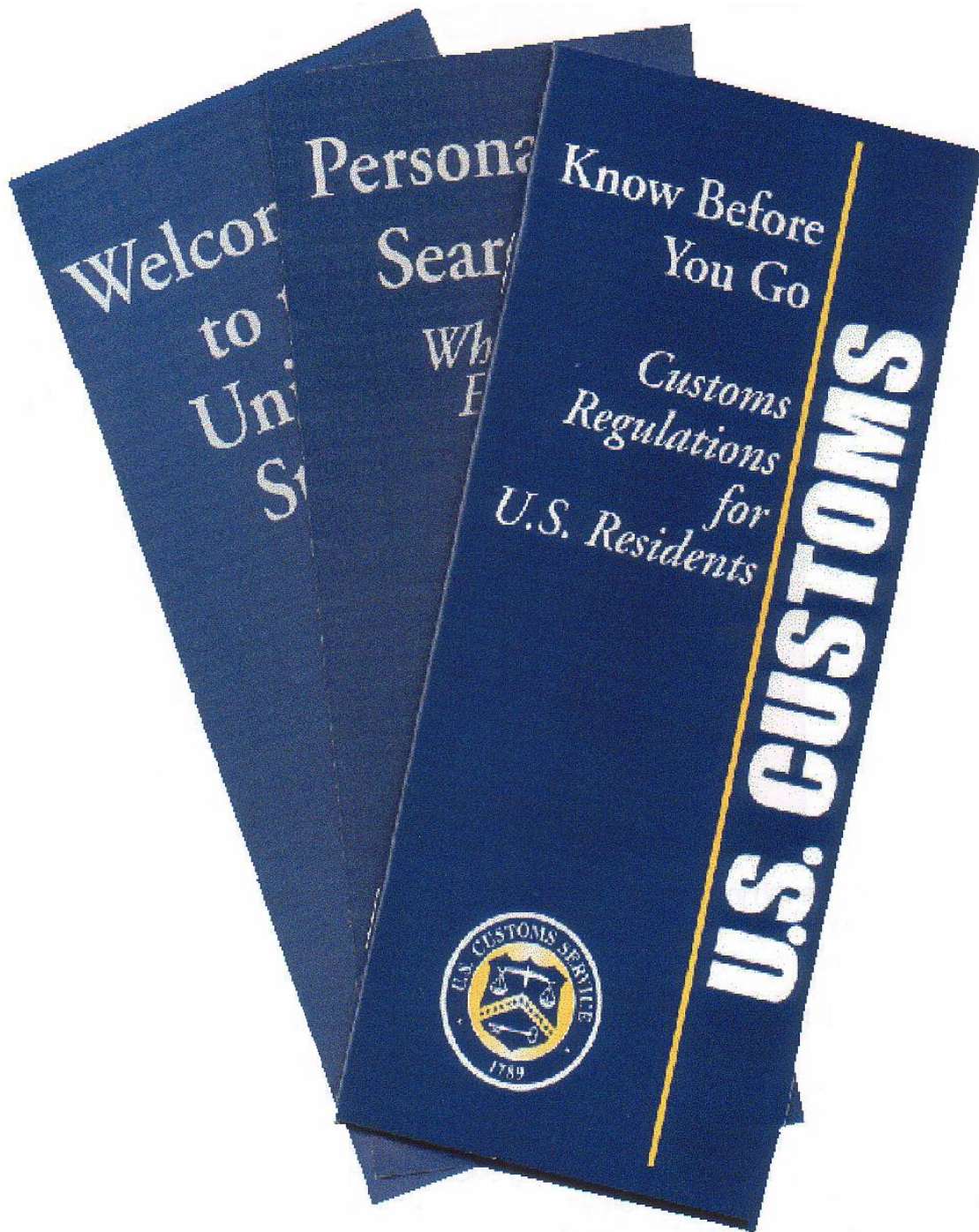
Recruitment, Job or Application questions, please contact:

AHRQ
540 Gaither Road
Rockville MD 20850
(301) 427-1364
www.ahrq.gov/about/vacancy.htm

World Directory of Dental Schools



www.fdiworlddental.org/resources/assets/dentalschoolsdirectory.pdf



www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel